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CABARET

THE ADULT ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE

**THE WORLD'S
RAWEST
BURLESQUE SHOW**

**ARE EUROPEAN
SINGERS SEXIER?**

**WHERE
TO GO FOR
NIGHT LIFE
IN 9 CITIES**



I STRIPPED AT 16

COVER

MONIQUE VAN VOOREN is that popular European breed known as chanteuse. The Belgian-born doll tried her hand at singing in Texan movies before moving into the night club spotlight and becoming a big name vocalist at big hotel rooms from coast to coast. She's a positive argument in the debate over whether European singers are better. Capturing her charms is easier for our cover was Bruce Bernard.



SHOWGIRL OF THE MONTH



PEGGY RAY is one of the new TV spouters—a commercial girl. With good looks and charms, she helps sell anything from cigarettes to deodorant. In between she takes thoughtless night-stands on shows such as Jackie Gleason's, and enjoys what wide open guests she can find around New York City.

AMONG the pundits who cover the bright-light beat along Broadway, Robert Sylvester is not exactly a youngster but he is a relative neophyte as a columnist, having joined the ranks little more than a year ago. However, his sprightly contribution to the pages of the New York Daily News have made him one of the most-read chroniclers in the biggest newspaper in the land in terms of circulation. This month he furnishes a report to *Canavist* readers on the two most exclusive nighties in America, the ultra-ultra Stork and El Morisco. Sylvester probes deeply in the profit motives of the two barons who run the clubs and comes

up with a humorous yet highly sober account.

Covering the full gamut of the night life whirl, *CANAVIST* also x-rays the other extreme of the world of entertainment and takes readers down to Cuba to have a look-see at "The World's Rawest Burlesque Show." Variety man Jay Mallin gives a full and authentic report on what he found at the Havana showspot that combines totally nude girls somewhat on the beefy side cavorting on stage between showings of stag movies. It's a delightful tale that points up the idea that *CANAVIST* furnishes readers a full-rounded picture of the world after dark and its well-rounded dolls.

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AMERICA'S MOST ELITE NIGHT CLUBS

No niteries in land draw as rich and exclusive a clientele as Stork and El Morocco clubs in New York and no two entrepreneurs prove as different as owners Sherman Billingsley and John Perann.

By Robert Sylvester



TOP CELEBRITIES in land make Stork Club their headquarters. Room has ample danc with orchestra playing soft music.



REGULAR AT STORK CLUB'S TABLE 14 is columnist Walter Winchell, who picks up many 'isms' from owner Sherman Billingsley. He has never advertised his club except in early years when he ran ads in college publications, paid editors in drinks.



THE BIGGEST CITY in America, New York, has the most wealth, the most established socialites and the most celebrities. One might suppose that New York is the sort of town which would have a dozen or more internationally famous and steadily successful "class" night clubs filled nightly with the rich and important only. It is one of the anomalies of night club history that, over the long haul, only two New York night clubs have consistently been able to draw support from what is accepted as The Elite.

These two night clubs are the Stork Club and El Morocco.

New York has many class restaurants with clientele as fancy or finer than these clubs and New York has many first-class cabarets—the Versailles and the Copacabana are but two—yet no night club has been able to threaten the eminence or "exclusiveness" of Stork and El Morocco.

This is a fact which is far from easy to analyze or explain. If the Stork had succeeded in knocking out Morocco, or vice versa, it would be relatively simple to trace the methods, rules and ruses operandi of the victorious joint and set down a diagram of how a truly exclusive and chic night club must be planned and developed. The



EL MOROCCO OWNER Jake Peroni likes to wear formal clothes, insist on patrons being as well-dressed as he is in club.



STORK CLUB OWNER Mermon Billingsley occupies seven floors of building. One whole floor is taken by bookkeepers.



DOORMAN at El Morocco is Harlem Negro dancer in uniform of native Moroccan soldier. Perona originally decided on complete euro-type decor because he did not want spiciness furnishings that cops could snuff.

FOREIGN LEGION UNIFORM is worn by attendants at El Morocco to carry out club's theme. Blue and white piping often stripes are prevailing background. Perona miniature small office next to club kitchen.

confusing truth, however, is that there could not be two night clubs more different than the Stork and El Morocco. They have, indeed, only one characteristic in common. Each is not only owned and operated by a single personality, but, in all truth, each is fiercely dominated by a personality. All other comparisons end there.

The Stork Club is owned by Sherman Billingsley. El Morocco is owned by John Perona. They are the most successful night club men in the history of the trade but the analyst who attempts to discover the secret of night club success through a study of these boys together can only be completely confounded by his findings. For two more different men never existed and the sole creation of each absolutely and completely negates the thinking, the management, the planning and the theories of the other.

John Perona is a self-made millionaire of Italian birth. He wears soft striped flannels of Beau Brummel cut, checkstriped or pinstriped. His jewelry is delicate and expensive. He is grey-



EL MOROCCO INTERIOR reflects plush chaise, Club is one of few which owns celebrities near wall away from dance floor to escape attention of public. Perona claims that lighting in club is flattering to women guests. Zebra stripes have become trademark.

haired and reasonably handsome in the European fashion. His mannerisms are quick, nervous and even jerky. He talks fast and often excitedly. He obviously possesses physical energy in inexhaustible volume. He is gregarious, likes high life, and is not averse to joining his cronies in tipping the wine bottle. He owns several foreign cars, in the past raced them himself, and he is a gentleman farmer who gets an almost joy out of growing things from the soil. He is 50 years old.

Sherman Billingsley is a self-made millionaire from Enid, Oklahoma. He wears solid color suits of conservative, almost chapelian cut. He is now nearly bald and handsome like the model in the successful businessman ads in hand-some. His mannerisms are deliberate. His walk and talk are controlled and slow. His manner usually suggests that he is tired, or even exhausted. Although one of the most famous hosts in epicurean history, he is not gregarious and usually is remote even with customers of long standing. His close friends are few. His hobbies fewer. He is a gentleman farmer who for years has been thoroughly bored with his farm and wishes he could unload it. He has the veteran saloon manager's wariness toward alcohol and rarely drinks. He is 54 years old.

The habits, histories and thinking of the two men are as divergent as their personalities. First for their habits:

Persons duly keeps what he rather wishfully refers to as his "banking hours." This means that he is awake, dressed, and on his feet in time to take



CROWDS often gather around Stork Club marquee to watch celebrities enter. Billingsley used to stage his television program directly from one of upper floors of building he owns.



CLUB ROOM is Stork's guarded inner sanctum reserved for special guests who are either celebrities or personal friends of Billingsley. Room is closely guarded by owner.



GLAMOUR GIRLS have always been catered to by Billingsley, who likes to devote his room with lavies. He used many of them on his television show, which is now off the air. One entire floor of building is taken up by entertainers and hostess for food.



TOMMY MANVILLE, much divorced playboy, is one of many celebrities who make Stark their permanent night headquarters.



CHINESE IMPORTER H. L. Hulch and his wife, Marion Sanders, usually welcome guests always seen nightly at El Morocco.



PARTY OF CELEBRITIES including author Ernest Hemingway and wife, Mrs. Lehard Hayward, speaker Tracy, George Jessel and producer Lehard Hayward join in Stark drink.

an active personal part in buying and selling stocks at his brokerage. He never appears at his office until after the stock market has closed for the day. Even then he finds many distractions to keep him from the business of El Morocco. He may spend the late afternoon and dinner hour sitting for a portrait by Salvador Dali. He may go for a spin in some new foreign car he owns. Or, if some exciting news story is in progress, he may merely stay home and listen to one of dozens of radios which are on every table and flat surface in his New Jersey home. There are, incidentally, no known telephones in his Jersey home. The caller who phones Perona at El Morocco in the late afternoon is usually told to call back "after nine o'clock tonight." El Morocco, of course, does not open for either lunch or cocktails. It is purely a supper club.

Billingley gets up later or earlier, according to the whim of the day, but from the moment he opens his eyes his every thought and act concerns the Stock Club. Today he may be at his club for lunch—when the place opens for business—or he may not be in until after cock. (Continued on page 48)



JOAN CRAWFORD joins Irving Berlin at cocktails at the Stock and is presented by gift of perfume by owner Billingley.



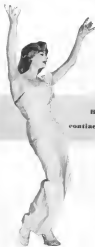
MANY MOVIE ROMANCES get started at Stark. Here Huguely Taylor holds hands with her first husband, Conrad Hobson, Jr.

ARE EUROPEAN SINGERS SEXIER?

MONIQUE VAN VOOREN has sexy, voluptuous look whether projecting through television screen or singing in club (below).



Belgium's husky entry in chanteuse stakes demonstrates why continental canaries soo so much more sexily than our own breed.



By Mort Cooper

IN THE PLUSH, velvet-stuffed cabaret world that is found in the nation's better hostelrys patronized by the upper brackets, a most pleasant institution has blossomed out in our generation known as the *chanteuse*. To the top-hatted graity and even the bourgeois-shaped downagers who foot

the tub at these swank rooms, the *chanteuse* is supposed to represent a bit of nostalgia from the old world, a chunk of the continent imported to our shores without benefit of ocean spray.

But the greys who keep look in these hotel halls of resvry know better.



SAUCY AND PROVOCATIVE, Monique prefers shortie nightgowns whether in bed or going for chaste photos. She will be seen in coming film, "Martin & Lewis In Paris."



IN TELEVISION REGULARLY, Monique plays roles of temptress. She does not mind being type-cast in that role with or without clothes (right), once played in Turner film.

To them the word *chanteuse* can be spelled in three letters: a-o-e. For over the years they have learned that the young ladies from foreign shores who come to our ballads to our hotel patrons symbolize a *bonic* instinct that adds up to the lowest common denominator in mankind. They can see in the response to these canaries something far different than what happens when our own native breed of vocalist belts out a pop tune.

It is not necessarily that the foreign ladies are more attractive or prettier but rather that they know how to project a certain quality that adds up to that ethereal quality known as sex appeal. The *chanteuse* art as practiced on these shores by a succession of *filles d'amour* such as Edith Piaf, Patachou, Genevieve, Jacqueline Francois adds up to a kind of perfume, *co-cha* sex. It is the difference between a *beudeir* and a *bedroom*.

And well-heeled customers in the ultra-ultra spots across the nation love it as a welcome relief from the braying of the likes of Kay Starr and Thelma Houston. This desire to enjoy the continental style of singing of unrequited love has brought a variety of imports





DECORATING SWIMMING POOL when playing night club engagement at Las Vegas Thunderbird Bowl. Monique knows just how to pose for poolside photos designed only to tease. She recently played in "Kismet," has starred in TV productions on Studio One.

across the waters, who are enjoying a full measure of prosperity on the night club circuits.

A case in point is a husky Belgian named Monique Van Vooren, who is not particularly a .450 batter when it comes to voice but who can just stand in a room and ooze sex. Whether the customers ever hear what she sings is questionable but whatever it is that she has, the patrons from the Masonette in New York to the Mocambo in Hollywood love it.

And Monique knows it. She is absolutely crazy—as the hep set would say—but like a Belgian fox.

Sitting in her Manhattan living room and cuddling Fuddy, her white poodle ("He doesn't have any lust measurements," she advises, "but then after all he's only a dog"), wit and refined suggestiveness roll off her tongue without the slightest hint of having been rehearsed. Instead of meeting a gorgeous but dumb show-gal who happened to be professionally lucky, one finds herself face to bust with a gorgeous but extremely intelligent and sensitive young lady.

Monique's star has never been so high as it is today and if she is able to commit herself to a third of the offers which have come to her since her sensational hit at the St. Regis Marescotte, there's little doubt that she can become the hottest item in show business. She kills her own singing and dancing, but she knows how to acquit herself on a stage or at a rink. Her fare is exquisite. Her 40-24-36 architecture is for real. She speaks English, French, Italian, Flemish and German, and can be funny and sexy in all of them.

Her answers to provocative questions are her own, not press agents'. "I love caviar by the spoonful (does that make me a ped?)—but only Hark caviar, and only if it matches my satin bed-sheets which must also be black. I can't stand yellow diamonds, but I enjoy corks in all colors. I used to have the hobby of collecting diamonds, by the way. Kind people gave them to me. Usually very kind people. I called that hobby my Boodles For Belgium campaign."

There's certainly nothing elusive about the blonde Belgian beauty's work at a rink. Her gowns are usually white and tight, the better to not only display a classically voluptuous body from the front but to display, when she gets fairly frisky (Continued on page 46)



IN FRENCH MOVIE. Monique was allowed to display a lot more of her talents than in Hollywood appearances. She paraded about in "Suez Naut" in bra and towel, got favorable notices for beauty. She appeared in three French films.



OUTDOOR GIRL despite her bombier tints, Monique enjoys pool in Las Vegas. She like Vegas dates to enjoy swimming



FURS AND SATIN SHEETS are favorites of Monique, who had 15-minute TV show eight in New York interviewing stars.

HOW TO RUN A NIGHT CLUB AND MAKE MONEY



By presenting strippers in class atmosphere, including a tropical storm every hour, serving best food in any U.S. club and charging reasonable prices, Warren St. Thomas makes a highly-profitable business out of his Tropics cabaret.

By Jacques Sarloff

TEN YEARS AGO a dapper, energetic young man still in his twenties bought a quarter million dollars to the mid-high city of Denver and promised that within six weeks he would turn a foundering neighborhood tavern site into Colorado's plushest night club. He hired 60 men to work all day, every day, paid them time and a half after 4:30 and double time on Sundays. In 180 days, hardly more time than it took to create the earth, that property on

Morrison Road was demolished and re-erected as the Tropics.

Almost at once—with the considerable help of instinctive business knowhow gimmicks, not the least of which was to sense just how to present strip teasers effectively in a class atmosphere—the Tropics became and has remained the most beautiful, popular and successful club in the entire Rocky Mountain area.



TROPICS OWNER WARREN ST. THOMAS enjoys playing with alligators before they are fed in Alligator Room of night club. Customers usually gather round to see alligators fed expensive \$25 meal of goldfish daily in room with ultramodern decor.



SALLY RAND has been regular favorite at Tropics since its opening. She is probably oldest stripper to perform in strip.



WILDCAT FRENCHIE was striking aspert from New Orleans. Redhead was presented in "hottest dance seen on Bourbon Street"

The fellow responsible for this success is a jiffy was Warren St. Thomas, a high tension man whose career has included rainfield charting as a Navy lieutenant commander and running an amusement park concession. A tall and robustly busy guy whose brain percolates new ideas continuously, he has never entered any project with half a heart or with the remotest doubts of instantaneous success.

Overnight St. Thomas became night club king of Denver. And he did it while defying the set rules followed by cabarets all over the country. He has consistently presented top names at his club—but not singers, comics or dancers. Rather his stars have all been strippers.

Nowhere in the world are strippers featured as in plush a club as the Tropics. And nowhere does an upper-bracket a crowd of celebrities come to watch them perform. St. Thomas is especially proud of the culture of customers who visit his cabaret—Evel Merman, Marilyn Monroe, Harry James, Fred Waring, Denver judges and members of the state legislature. Normally these people would not go out of their way to see a burlesque show but they do come to see the equivalent of such shows at the Tropics. "The secret is simple," St. Thomas explains. "Just have a setting of class if you want a night club jackpot. Sure, our shows are risqué; now and then when we have headliners like Bucki Covette or Do May the spice runs pretty high. But I've yet to hear a woman customer complain of being offended by a show here. Maybe it's because we never stop working to keep the Tropics a mixture of earthy, fun and the height of taste in decor and management."

And St. Thomas does have all that.

In what other club, for instance, which demands neither cover charge nor minimum (except a stupendous half dollar on Saturday nights), can you see tropical storms,



REYERE AND ROCHE do popular girl and ape act which always thrills audiences. Owner St. Thomas draws top local celebs



UNUSUAL EXOTIC ACTS are sought by visitors St. Thomas and Indian stripper Do May confers to his exotic friends.

consisting of electrical illusions, scenic effects, and real water disappearing into drains and containers that appear to be hammocks?

The Tropics has real palm trees. There are six footoodoo masks (which St. Thomas makes himself) lining the walls. There is an Alligator Room, a very special feature which boasts light black walls, a design that is carried out and lit up with strong black lights. Modernistic weird-looking trees are built up in relief. Built into the floor is a long cement pit containing two live alligators. In keeping with the weird atmosphere, the alligators are fed goldfish (an expensive dinner which costs the management \$15 per feeding).

During the summer, a large sliding glass wall opens onto an outdoor dance floor and garden.

Inside the club, the hydraulic stage lifts to any height up to six feet and on this stage, throughout the year, the best-known strippers appear. Any night a headline poster is grinning, winking, rotating and bumping—and at popular prices, too.

Despite a large staff, St. Thomas personally oversees



BLONDE BUBBLE BATHER Pat Holman is regular feature at least once a year at Tropics. Her act fits in with tropical concept.

everything that goes on from the evening's opening till its close. "Denver was ready for a volume club when I came on the scene," he says. "That means a club that offers everything a visitor could imagine, and at prices that wouldn't send him away screaming into the night. I believe in avoiding anything that doesn't smack of top quality and of selling that quality at moderate prices. A customer who comes to the Tropics always returns because he knows he's going to have the time of his life, without being robbed in the bargain."

What constitutes the time of one's life? St. Thomas obviously has the answer, because in the ten years his doors have been open, he has had a steady and overflowing patronage. Notary bonfires throughout the United States invariably show up at the Tropics as they pass through the West, to study this remarkable success story and to see how they too might prosper.

Name strippers like to work the beautiful Denver spot because St. Thomas is at the helm, which means they are guaranteed of getting limitless production cooperation. Evelyn West, the \$50,000 Treasure Chest who played the



HIGHEST SALARY ever paid a stripper was given to Evelyn West when she exhibited her "550,000 Treasure Chest" at Denver's most picturesque night club

FAVORITE CLUB of Evelyn West, Tropics is also preferred by other strippers because of excellent production facilities and fine lighting at lavish Denver hideouts



PERFORMING AT ORGAN on club in Denver St. Thomas, attractive wife of owner. Couple has daughter, big swimming pool.

Tropics recently and far exceeded the business brought in by Sally Rand, Tempest Storm, Carrie Finnell and Do May (all Tropics regulars), is especially laudatory of him:

"Warren is not a saloonkeeper or a strip joint owner. He is a creative artist who might have been an outstanding designer, painter or architect, but who happens to run the world's most exciting night club. He's the exotic dancer's dream. He's a master showman."

"He doesn't just provide a stage for a dancer, he sets it so that she has everything in the way of special lighting that will make for a better performance. He designed the stage and lighting system in such a way that a performer is able to be seen by everyone in the large room—an incidental fact that makes some performers hesitate about playing other clubs. But there's never any hesitation when the Tropics summons."

While patrons watch the minimum of four strippers who appear nightly, and watch in an atmosphere lush with luxury, they also eat what some professional observers have called the best food to be found in an American club. St. Thomas doesn't bother with the standard chow mein and





OUTDOOR PATHO of club has dunes those whose couples can enjoy water under stars. With mild weather, it is an constant rest.

glorified hamburgers which some of the most elegant natives feel free to serve. He bastes his chicken with champagne and prepares his lamb on flaming swords.

The steaks he sells deserve some special comment. He carefully ages them, then broils them over hot ceramic rocks. The ceramic arrangement consists of ordinary gas burners placed under volcanic rocks which get red hot like charcoal and hold their heat. The steaks are broiled over these rocks on steel bars and seared to fire produced from



ENTRANCE LOBBY of Tropics has comfortable wicker-type chairs where patrons can enjoy drink at coffee table while waiting.

their own fat. It's a complicated process but a rewarding one. Unlike a large percentage of club owners, St. Thomas plays up rather than hides the fact that he sells food.

Semi-classical and longhair piano artists have played the Tropics and have gone over well but, St. Thomas admits, "It cost me a lot of money to learn that the public prefers the strip tease. I give it to them, along with good food, drinks, and an exciting background and they keep coming back for more." (Continued on page 47)



LEOPARD-SKIN OUTFITS are worn by waitresses at Tropics. Much of decor is also done in zebra stripes. St. Thomas has big turnover of patrons with as many as four shows nightly. He also presents a show on Sunday afternoon at 7, charges no minimum or cover.



"She made the mistake of crossing her fingers instead of her legs!"



DANCE TEAM of Lopez and Romero do apache number in which he strips the costume off Cecilia. She frolics her dance mate



MANAGER Jose Antonio Garcia has run Shanghai for 24 years, claims it is only place in world where stag movies are shown publicly.

THE WORLD'S RAWEST BURLESQUE SHOW



GIRLS OF ALL NATIONALITIES, shapes and sizes work in Shanghai. In many numbers, girls remove costumes behind props like cardboard bunnies and then step forward.

Nowhere can public see as risqué and raucy a show as in Havana, where patrons see combined stag movies and strip tease.

By Jay Mallin

FOR A LONG TIME, Havana has enjoyed the reputation of being the sexiest city in the Western hemisphere. To nearly everyone—and Americans especially—her main commodities have been rum, cigars and women.

But the Americans expecting to find the ultimate in wickedness in Havana will be disappointed in at least one respect. The famed capital of Latin vice has only one burlesque house. It is the Shanghai Theatre, located appropriately enough in Chinatown, among the narrow, winding streets of old Havana.

But if it's small in numbers, Cuban burlesque more than makes up for it in punch. There is probably nothing—including the rawest of Parisian shows—that is quite as raw as the peculiar combination of blackout skills, sexy dances and stag movies that make up the Shanghai bill.

There have been other burlesque houses in the city, but over the years they have succumbed to the onslaught of the law. The Shanghai, however, continues to operate and pack 'em in every night as it has for the past 24 years.

"We close only for revolutions," says Jose Orsoco Garcia, a paunchy, affable fellow with a big cigar and the tattering of a syndicate boss, including fedoras. He has managed the house since it opened. "We aren't bothered by anything else," he says, smiling as he fingers his diamond studpin.

A shabby, hulking building on Zanja Street, between Manrique and Carpanera, the theater was originally built as a home for onestal drama. In spite of a large Chinese population, the art form fell on evil days, however, and the theater changed hands to become a burlesque hall.

Seats range in price from 65 cents for a bench in the



TRADITIONAL RHUMBA is also part of Shanghai show, but always winds up with strip act that leaves dancer wearing G-string.



BOX OFFICE at Shanghai has sign in English which advertises: "Nude dancers with 5 beautiful girls. Real naked models."

belong to \$1.25 for a stagside chair. Inside, the house is surprisingly large. It seats 750-400 on the main floor and 350 in the balcony.

The audience is almost entirely male. It's a rare occasion in most ways than one when a curious tourist appears on the arm of an escort to see the show.

Groups of society women do however occasionally denounce and watch the proceedings from boxes discreetly ranged along the side of the house.

But everyone is much more comfortable when there are no ladies in the audience. This is not so much a delicacy, but because week-stomached Americans tenders have had to be carried from the house in a semi-hysterical state after seeing part of the show. Just the same, Garcia sees to it that when a woman does come, she is treated with due respect.

"This is a nice place," he says. "We never have any trouble with the tourists. They like it very much, and we are happy to have them."

The rest of the audience—in fact the major portion—is native in the peculiarly cosmopolitan fashion of Havana. Any night the house will be filled with Chinese, Spanish, Negro, Cuban and a half dozen other nationality groups, and from all strata of society. "Everybody in Havana knows the Shanghai," Garcia says proudly. "And everybody comes here."

What they find is a show that is unique among even the most unusual Havana entertainment. The program is a combination of American burlesque. (Continued on page 44)



COMIC RELAXES backstage with some of Shanghai's chorines, who have tendency to be very bold like many of Cuba's girls.

TO
STAGE



"For some reason or other, they bill me as a double feature."

THE GREAT ALL-AMERICAN



First made by a Kentucky
reverend, native wine
of blue grass state has
become favorite drink
of nation but still is
a proud tradition in land
of corn and colonels.



INSTITUTION OF BOURBON



By Harry Rotsford

BOURBON is an all-American institution of native corn, rye and wheat, speckled barley, thoroughlybred yeast and limestone water, plus skill, experience and some special and intricate equipment. In a glass of this amber ambrosia there lurks grandeur, renaissance, achievement and American history that will never be forgotten. It has been that way since the first bourbon was made by the Reverend Elijah Craig of Georgetown, Kentucky, in 1799.

It became the favorite tipple of two famous Democrats—Webster and Boone. It was acclaimed by Davy Crockett, Henry Clay, and a host of robust men in every walk of life, statesmen, explorers, soldiers and sailors, industrial leaders and educators, to say nothing of prominent members of the clergy.

Bourbon's originator, the Reverend Craig, was a deeply religious man. He hated the economic waste that he observed in Kentucky, which grew enormous crops of fine corn that lacked transportation. Kentucky needed markets for its native produce, he knew. The abundant corn fattened the droves of hogs and from them was processed what was—and is—about the finest salt-cured ham

in the world, so good that currently they rival the famous Smithfield hams of Virginia. But the market for both hams and corns was a purely local one. And the corn was difficult to transport in bulk. If the corn could be reduced in volume, it would be easier to transport.

The Reverend Elijah did some deep thinking, came up with the idea of distilling a whiskey which he decided to call Bourbon after a county in Kentucky. He overlooked the main asset in the proposed venture, limestone water. An abundance of it spurts from hillbores and it is so strongly infused with limestone that it is slightly milky. It proved to be ideal in making bourbon. The mash was cooked in it. It was used to cool the coals and stills; and it imparted an unsurpassed smoothness to the distillate. As the Reverend Elijah looked over the land appraisingly, he discovered another asset that was convenient and cheap—an abundance of white oak for the staves needed to make the charred barrels in which the whiskey could be stored, aged and colored to a deep amber.

His venture took on stature, became prosperous. Naturally, others followed suit, and soon there were many

distilleries in operation in Kentucky. The whiskey was aged according to the whim of the early distillers, sold in kegs and barrels to saloons and general stores. The distillers gave the buyers bottles in which to draw off the whiskey for what we now call off-premises consumption.

The ugly head of competition became visible and claims for purity, age and smoothness were made and matched with great readiness by various distillers. Salesmen of the distillers were not without guile. They invariably carried a pocket of iron 10-penny nails and it was their wont to slip a few of these into the barrels of bourbon made by a competitor. Presently, customers would swallow a dipperful of bourbon from their favorite barrel, clutch their throats and scream and curse that they had been poisoned. Bourbon, it seemed, became acid-like liquid when exposed to iron.

At such times, the owner of the establishment where the tragedy occurred would pour himself a dipper of bourbon and take a healthy slug. To the horror of the proprietor, he discovered that the victims had not been fooling. They certainly had a decided grievance. Another keg or barrel from the same distillery was opened, free drinks were served and the bourbon was pronounced perfect. Saloon owners and storekeepers took a long time to discover the cause of the trouble, and by this time, the practice had become general.

In spite of crude distillation methods, bourbon literally became the native wine of Kentucky. It was made elsewhere, in fact almost any place where corn would grow, where the springs gushed the famous limestone water, but there was a concentration in Kentucky. The concentration is as simple as Detroit being the car center of the world and Akron becoming the tire kingdom.

Bourbon became an integral part of the social life of Kentucky. Whenever it was consumed, it was respected and held in high affection. Enormous punchbowl of a fascinating blend of bourbon and fruit juices were common features at the grand balls, the gay parties held at city mansions, the hospitable plantation houses.

The hunt breakfast became a tradition of the period. The yards of plantation homes were filled with stamping horses, with women correctly habited, gracious and lovely, full of sparkle and life—with tall lean men whose riding boots had a dull gleam, who were correct and polite.

Two things featured the hunt breakfast. There were glasses of whiskey sour, composed of bourbon as a starter, for this was before the day of orange and vegetable juices. There would be a vast and succulent baked ham on the sideboard, a Negro slave who sliced it paper thin. There would be relays of hot biscuits, scolds of honey and home-made jams, eggs any way the guests preferred them. It was a leisurely meal, a dignified repast, eaten standing up, for the tight breeches of the men made it difficult for them to sit down. There would be a final cup of coffee and the conversational din would

rise in tempo. Outside the impatient hounds would raise their voice in eager competition, the riders' horses would prance. All mounted, the departing guests would take a strong cup of good bourbon. There would be a clatter of hooves, the crack of the whip from the master of the fox hounds, and the hunt was officially launched. Yookee!

It is said that Kentucky had—and still has—a plethora of colonels, not a few of whom had been titled by an act of the legislature, or named by the governor, an honorary title. The traditional colonel was a spare old man, he sported a white goatee of chain-gunbed steel, his apparel was neat, he was always pictured lounging on the pillared porch of a country plantation, gazing with deep satisfaction across white fenced fields of blue grass in which capered thoroughbred colts, their sedate mothers. The picture of ease, he relaxed almost continuously, sipping ever and anon from a frosted silver mug of mint julep.

And well he might have for the Kentucky julep is a thing apart. The method has come down through the ages without change. It is simple to make and it has great virtue. Duels were fought by Kentucky gentlemen against Virginians, the natives of Tennessee, Marylanders and others who clung to an alien school of thought as to what they believed to be a proper ceremonial julep.

A Kentucky Senator was invited to a soiree in Washington at the home of a famous hostess. He was offered a julep, tasted it, and his face turned a fiery red, and he choked a little. He hastily excused himself, left the party muttering about the sheer treason of anyone who tried so unsuccessfully to duplicate the true Kentucky julep. A man of firm conviction, he rejected all further invitations to this home, regarded it as all bounds for any true Kentuckian.

The true son of Kentucky is a self-appointed judge of good bourbon. He can't be fooled, for this is an inherited wisdom as a rule. He knows, for example, that bottled-in-bond is not a guarantee of goodness, but of alcoholic strength. It is a government designation meaning that in addition to being a true bourbon distilled at the proper proof, aged in the right kind of barrels, it has been kept in those barrels for a minimum of 4 years, not more than 6 years. It is whiskey that must be the product of one distillery, and made in the fall or spring of the same year.

It must be bottled at 100 proof, no more, no less.

The judge of bourbon bases his firm opinions on the following:

- (1) The bend
- (2) The clug
- (3) The empty glass
- (4) The palm
- (5) The sip

The judge will take a bottle of bourbon, shake it gently, delightfully watch the bubbles rise and break. The richer the bend, the longer it will last.

As for the clug, a goblet is partially filled with bourbon, the glass is slowly twirled between the palms, forcing the whiskey up along the sides. The glass is then held stationary. The dribbles will gather, slowly (continued on page 48)





"Lucky Joyce, she's collecting workmen's compensation. She backed into a sizzling platter!"



COMPARISONS of Marilyn Monroe to late movie star Jean Harlow are renewed by rising burlesque queen Jane Harlow (right), who claims that she looks more like her famous aunt. 20th Century-Fox studio is planning to make film biography of Jean Harlow next year with Marilyn playing the very screen star who died in late 30's.

JUNE HARLOW NAKED AMAZON

I STRIPPED AT 16

By June Harlow

I STARTED stripping when I was 16 years old.

People sometimes look shocked when I tell them that. They wonder how a "meat child," as they call me, could even think in her teens of making her living as a stripper. They wonder what effect it had on my morals. And then they shake their heads in disbelief even more when they learn that my aunt was the famous movie star, Jean Harlow, and that I began stripping at 16 because I figured that was the easiest way to follow in her footsteps in show business.

And then the final crusher comes when they find out that I got married when I was 17—and that my husband

Niece of famed movie platinum blonde tells how she started in burlesque at early age because those are girl's 'best years.'

IN FRONT OF MARQUEE at Chicago theater where she is booked, Jean Harlow displays beauty that resembles her famed aunt, late star Jean Harlow.

CABARET



GIRL OF THE MONTH

June Harlow

The dream of following
her aunt, Joan Harlow, and
becoming Hollywood star





IN PHOTO STUDIO, June proves excellent model as well as talented stripper. She has had top parts in several movies, including "Twelve Mile Reef" and "City That Never Sleeps."



LONG SLENDER legs and shapely torso were developed by June after long reducing diet. She likes to act as glamorous girl (below) even when she goes to bed after long night's stage work.



is a brother of famed baseball great Joe DeMaggio.

I guess that it all does add up to something startling to people who live a sheltered life. But as far as I'm concerned, I don't regret any of it for one little minute. In fact I'm very happy that I started stripping when I was "sweet sixteen," a time when some girls just start dating. My early start means that I haven't wasted any of my "best years."

And certainly a girl has her "best years" and that applies particularly to strippers. Today a girl is old in stripping by the time she is 25. If she hasn't made it by then, she might as well give up. Sure, there are some who last longer—gals like Carrie Finnell or Gypsy Rose Lee or Sally Rand. But they aren't making it any more on what they show but rather how they show it—or what's left of it.

They are the exceptions that prove the rule. For the ordinary girl, the best years are the young years when you don't have to worry about stretch, sag or slump.

They're the years when you have your greatest appeal for audiences, and believe me, unless you're a Gypsy or a Carrie, you haven't got a chance when you lose that. Starting early has brought me to the point where today, at 18, I am the youngest featured performer in burlesque. I have my whole career before me, and I'm already half way up the ladder.

I have plenty of time to make it the rest of the way to the top. I don't



JUNE LIKES TO PORTRAY THEMES in her numbers. Two contrasting moods are presented in *American Beauty*. Here, number in which she is clad in root costume and issues fresh roots to audience. In another she does cat dance (left). "I try to portray something in my numbers," she says. "I don't just come out and take off all my clothes just for the sake of being underwear."



IN DRESSING, June puts on a show, too. June believes girl should learn how to untress gracefully before husband and practices the art herself.



PREPARING BREAKFAST for husband is regular chore for June. Her marriage to Anthony DeMaggio combined two famous lunches—the baseball DeMaggios and the acting Burtons.



HELPING HAND with costume is given June by hubby before she goes on stage. He acts as master of ceremonies for her strip-tease act in many clubs.



READY FOR STAGE ENTHANCE, June makes her way up stairway from basement dressing room at Folies Theater in Chicago, where she was headliner.

know if I'll last beyond 25, but by that time I hope I won't have to worry about it. I'll have it made.

No, I don't regret starting early at all, and my advice to any girl who is thinking of show business as a career would be: start early.

How does a girl get started as a stripper at the age of 16? That's not an easy one to answer for other girls. But I can tell how it happened to me.

My aunt was the late Jean Harlow, who is still famous as the most beautiful movie star of the 1930's, and the original "platinum blonde." Aunt Jean died—of uremic poisoning, not in an airplane crash, as many people think—just a year before I was born. I never knew her personally, and it is one of the greatest regrets of my life. But her personality was constantly present throughout my childhood. My relatives talked about her a lot, and every so often someone would look at me and say: "Little Jane takes after her aunt. When she grows up, she'll probably follow in her footsteps."

Then they would turn to me and say, "How would you like to be a big movie star, honey?"

There was never any question in my mind what I was going to be when I grew up. I was going to be a big movie star just like Aunt Jean. It's an ambition I still cherish, and one that I am constantly working to achieve.

As time passed, however, it became pretty plain that there was one big catch to my ambitions about show business. To put it bluntly, I grew up fat and not at all pretty. Somehow, my baby resemblance to Aunt Jean faded, and instead of her delicate features and slender limbs, I found myself with a round, snub-nosed face and pudgy figure.

I began to feel like an ugly duckling. The talk about my great career somewhere faded out of the family conversations.

It didn't get any better when, at 13, I left home in Kansas City to go to live with my married sister in St. Louis. I began to feel desperate. School got less and less interesting. The future seemed hopeless.

Then one day I read an ad in the paper that said, "Girls Wanted—No Experience Necessary." It was put in by the manager of a show lounge on Chestnut Street in St. Louis, where I was living. So, I did the only thing I could see to do. I packed my bag, walked quietly out of the house, and went to him. (Continued on page 45)



WORKING IN NITERIES. Jane likes to dance at the edge of stage and perform for each customer individually. "Night club work is exciting," she says. "It offers more of a challenge than anything I've done." She started in chorus line in St. Louis theater.



THEATRICAL bag inherited from late aunt, Jean Harlow, has adorned Jane who likes to travel on road and see her name in lights in front of theaters.

BILL HALEY:



BILL HALEY beats out time on his guitar while saxophonist curls up on floor to blow at one of his rock 'n' roll concerts

HIGH PRIEST OF ROCK 'N' ROLL

While do-gooders shout he's fulfilling sex urges with R & R cult, Bill insists he just provides fun for youngsters.

By Leonard Bennett

WHAT "23 skidoo" and "Oh you kid" were to the roaring 20's, such expressions as "See you later, alligator" and "After a while, crocodile" have become to the frantic 50's. They are a product of the rock 'n' roll era, a mad, bawdy, wild binge of erotic music that has the younger generation bouncing about in delirium shouting insanities for the high priest of the cult, a cool, calculated gent named Bill Haley who is bound to make a cool, calculated million before the rock 'n' roll craze dies.

There are those who believe rock 'n' roll is some kind of new phenomenon that is responsible for all the juvenile delinquents in the land. They are claiming that the 2 R's are replacing the 3 R's for teenagers.

Another crowd sees in rock 'n' roll the sinister hand of what they call the "integrationists," people who want to end the color line in the South. And in some parts of Dixie, pickets have actually patrolled outside halls where rock 'n' roll has been played.



VARIED REACTIONS OF GIRL FANS to R & R is seen in these two girls, one almost about to cry and other shouting and laughing hysterically in response to one of Bill Haley's hot tunes.





SPIT CURL is cultivated by Bill Haley for concert appearances. Suits which he changes between numbers are laid out on table in his dressing room (right). Tastes are conservative



WILD ANTICS OF **HALEY** and brought down wrath of Miami city censors, which blasted R & R at concert as "sordid raggle"

But the sane, sober musicologists who follow the history of rhythm state very simply that rock 'n' roll is no more and no less than what it sounds like—good music. Actually its ancestry goes back through varying schools of jazz beginning with Dixieland and tracing its way through swing, bebop and cool. If anything, rock 'n' roll is basically a graduate school of swing with the same fundamental beat and even Bill Haley might admit that in private.

But as the high priest of R & R, Haley refuses to talk much about his art, rather he practices what he won't preach. And as a practitioner of R & R, Haley is doing quite well, thank you.

In only two years time the Haley aggregation called the Comets has sold more than 10,000,000 records. Today R & R is the No. 1 music form in the land, Tin Pan Alley analysts admit, in terms of record sales, and will likely go on being successful for at least another year.

Bill Haley is neither dazed nor even surprised that his records far outsell Sinatra's, Croze's, Shore's and Stafford's, or that he and his gang, when they make personal appearances, are the hottest item in the music world today. Their "See You Later, Alligator" went over the 1,000,000 platter marker in less than two months. "Crazy, Man, Crazy," and "Shake, Rattle and Roll" also hit a million sales, and "Rock Around The Clock" passed two million.

They play to standees when they unleash their music energy in theaters, night clubs, auditoriums and drive-ins. Their second movie for Columbia Pictures, "Rock Around The Clock" was shot in no time at all and at a ridiculously low budget, but played 300 cities and broke box office records in sober cities like Denver, Seattle, and Omaha. They were offered \$45,000, plus transportation costs for themselves and their families, to play 15 days in Australia. It's been estimated that, if they wished, they could work 60 weeks out of every 14. Their recording company, Decca, can't get their discs mailed to distributors fast enough.

What's made this outfit as big as it is? Professionals in the pop field have debated it, and (Continued on page 54)



LOOKING LIKE SOCIETY GIRL, in clothes or just draped in fox fur
pelt, Brandy Martin proves a class performer whenever she strips.



SOCIALITE STRIPPER...



MINK STOLE is part of
entrance on stage, and off.

Brandy Martin emerged from same society set
as Grace Kelly to become burlesque exotic.

By Arch Ames



RELAXING BETWEEN SHOWS. Brandy displays charm that has made her Harold Minsky's choice as one of top strippers.



ARISTOCRATIC CARRIAGE is maintained by Brandy, even when wearing flimsy lingerie. She is well-proportioned 37-23-35.



DRESSED IN LAYERS GOWN. Brandy starts her act with salute with around stage to left music. She often works in Miami.

BECAUSE her parents are conspicuously-prominent Philadelphia socialites, Brandy Martin's name is as real as a twelve-dollar bill. But that's the only phony thing about this dignified ball of sex-stoked fire who, in just the past year, has become one of the hottest stars in burlesque—a strip tease with a high society background.

Brandy was about as socially prepared to become a professional stripper as Elvis Presley was primed to study under a Rhodes scholarship. Born into wealth, Brandy's parents moved her from New York to Philadelphia when she was four years old.

"Our first house there had just about everything but a moat," Brandy recalls now. "It was enormous—ornate, high and wide, quite beautiful and a little frightening. I was privately tutored till I was twelve years old, then my parents enrolled me in a private school in New Jersey. I must have been about sixteen or seventeen before it really occurred to me that there might be girls my own age somewhere in the world who didn't have all the material comforts they wanted."

Living on the Main Line, however, did give Brandy the basic essentials of the exotic number that she does currently on the burlesque circuit. She has that exotic thing



DROPPING SOPHISTICATION, Brandy also drops her gown and becomes an unabashed stripper whose bumps rate with the best.

called class when she starts removing her clothes. Tall and perfectly proportioned at 37-23-35, Brandy performs the usual physical gyrations that are the tricks of her current trade but leaves the feeling that somehow or other she's different. And certainly she is.

This Philadelphia story has a happy ending but it was not that story at the start.

The girl who now bumps and grinds out a living confesses she never felt quite relaxed about making a social stir with that silver spoon which had been born in her mouth. Not unlike Grace Kelly's father Jack, who'd started life as a laborer and had worked for his millions, Brandy's father had been poor and had made a fortune within a little more than a year by postlaying some borrowed money into a stock and bond empire. The Martins (as Brandy asks us to call them here) had as much or more money than their Pennsylvania neighbors, but they were not fully brought into the blue book category until Brandy's industrious mother took over and vowed that her daughter was not going to be snubbed by the other families of wealth simply because Papa—like Jack Kelly—had not inherited his aristocracy.

Determined that Brandy would (Continued on page 46)





"Amazing rhythm haven't they!"

glamour gab

By Morton Cooper

FOREIGN CONDÉMNÉS. Jennie Lee, just back from the Orient, reports that peepers there have no talent and little to show. She told a newsmag in Tokyo: "They don't leave correctly. They just come out on stage and say here it is." Between bumps Jennie is trying to organize an exotics dancers' softball team. . . . The most popular belly-rina in Egypt is a gal named Radia, whom Americans aggressives have been trying to import. Radia who performs with her own troupe of navel academicians, each of whom she personally trained, insists she's happy where she's doing her belly rolls now. . . . By latest count there are now 112 strippers operating in Paris. Perhaps the oddest number, in Paris or anywhere else, is the gal who comes out dressed in widow's black and proceeds to weep to funeral music. . . .

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TV TOPICS. NBC has long had a ban on anything resembling bumps and grinds on its television network but Elvin Presley has been getting away with it on a variety of shows. However, the lucky-diddies freshly caught up with him after he appeared on the Milton Berle show, Elvin has been told to keep pelvic under control under TV cameras or else he'll be banned. . . . One New York newspaper critic wrote after Presley's TV show: "Baroque bombshell Georgia Southern really deserves equal time to reply in grating kind." . . . Walter Winchell will have a night club of his own on television this Fall. It'll be on the NBC network and consist of top acts from show business that the columnist himself will pick. . . .

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SCREEN STUFF. For the first time, Hollywood film production code has okayed nudity in a movie. The arty picture, "The Naked Eye," is about the art of photography and includes extensive scenes of total nudity, some of them by internationally famous photographer Edward Weston. . . . Minneapolis movie operators have come up with a new gimmick to attract customers. Because the local newspapers have been so sensitive in censoring

movie ads that feature sex, the local houses have gone out of their way to advertise their films as for adults only. The result has been a big increase in business. . . . Cleo Moore, who has spent most of her adult life playing a dumb blonde in the movies, has finally decided she's had enough. She's kissed off Columbia Pictures and issued this declaration of independence: "A blonde has to be a lot smarter than a brunette because she has to go through life proving how dumb she isn't." . . . Two Broadway musicals are set for filming. The long delayed "Can Can" will star Danny Kaye and Mamie Grevahy. . . . MGM is doing "Silk Stockings," also by Cole Porter, with Fred Astaire and Cyd Charisse. . . .

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PETERAWLING. Comic Morry Amsterdam, who says he wrote "Run and Cocca Cola" ("And I've got the law suits to prove it") is currently killing misery audiences with his impersonation of James Cagney—all in Yiddish. . . . Paterson, N.J.'s Steak Pit will serve only two Pernods to a customer. It seems the liquor not only sends you to loopyland fast but its anise is a sex stimulant. And quite legal, too. . . . Nat King Cole opens at the Coronet

Grove in Los Angeles on Sept. 5 for three weeks—a first for him. Days he's co-star with Lena Turner and Van Johnson in a Ben Hecht picture at MGM. . . . Club business in Manhattan, now picking up, business suddenly and unaccountably lull this Spring. The only time the ropes were up was when two male boxes banged themselves. . . . Out in Las Vegas they're making a new claim for slot machines; it's the only thing that can stand with its back to the wall and defy the whole world.

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RECORD ROW. The Crescens, better than their records not only here in the States but also on South Africa juke boxes, have been signed for personal appearance early in 1957 when that city celebrates its 50th anniversary. . . . Remember Arthur Tracy, The Street Singer? With \$5,000,000 from real estate, he's gone from singing on streets to buying streets. He's recording again, now for Columbia—this time as a soloist. . . . "Ella Fitzgerald Sings The Cole Porter Songbook" tops the sales of anything Ella's done yet and is expected to outsell all other record albums in 1956. . . .

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BUMP BANTER. Maybe it's a counter-movement to the increasing number of kingly strippers in burly. Now there's a midgap peeker unveiling around the circuit. She's a Mexican gal named Alondrita, who's just about waist high to the average man or woman for that matter (see photo). . . . Evelyn West is now booked solid for the next ten months—an unheard-of feat among the strip set. . . . From Mosky's third row center, Rita Grable is a ringer for Monroe. . . . The most libelous statement yet comes from a Nevada critic who suggested that tall, torrid Betty Howard does not have much upstairs. Our official answer: Buddy, have you looked at her stairway lately? . . . Pert Julie Gibson of the Wedge in Philadelphia, is the late peeler to turn legit. She's now finishing a season of summer stock, having established a box office record as the native girl in that creaky perennial, "White Cargo."



THE WORLD'S RAWEST BURLESQUE SHOW

(Continued from page 25)

lesque, Fernch Fabes Bergren, Cuban harem. Latin dance and stag parties the world around.

The curtain, obviously a holdover from the decades past. Gaudin's dance, opens to reveal a stage filled with girls. Tall, when, shorter, tall, light, dark, they pose in a series of plastic forms, modestly attired in shorts and bras.

The orchestra swings into a fast rhythm. The girls break their poses, form a chorus line and advance, swaying, to the stage apron. There they demurely reach behind, undo a snap and duff their legs, dangling them enticingly as they two step back to the rear of the stage.

With a tremendous flourish from the orchestra, the curtain swings shut. The orchestra begins another tune. The curtain is open, to discover the girls, now nude, each covering herself modestly with a parasol. Once again they advance, twirling the parasol, and doing a series of seductive maneuvers that parody the Radio City chorus line. Then, suddenly, the ladies all fold up their parasols and stand, completely revealed.

Blackout. Fasten. Curtain.

The sort of display alternates through the show with those other more attractive. Of these, the second is doubtless the climax of some specific dances done by Cohecha Lopez and Alfred Romero. The pair whirl around the stage while Romero automatically struts the fat Cohecha on G string and bra. Then, in a safe bet, she finishes stripping altogether.

Blackout. Fasten. Curtain.

Occasionally, as an encore, the lights and curtain come up to reveal the many shaped chorine in another nude tableau for an instant.

Third as the bill is one of a series of Blackout skits which are almost impossible for the tourist to understand, but these the native audience and connoisseurs of laughter. Almost any French, American or Cuban work that can be cut and edited to make a sex "point" is gaudy for stranger Antonio Lopez.

Cockshiden, seducery, a boy's first visit to a lewdy house, boyhood, and the anxious problem of old age are typical themes. All of the glitzy acts are liberally interlarded with topical references, colloquial ad lib, some music. Frequently the phony, who double, triple, and even quadruple in roles through the evening, don the makeup of famous screen or television stars.

Typical of the humor is a popular skit in which a boy and a girl in a restaurant. The two sit at a bare table, the waiter appears and pulls a pair of menus from his pocket.

The boy asks where the tableware is. With out a word the waiter gaily karves, butter, spoons, napkins out of his pocket and sets the table. After some discussion of the menu, the girl orders coffee. Out comes a cup and a pot and the coffee is poured. Salt and pepper? No, sugar, right here in the hip pocket. Sugar? Yes, in a bottle from the jacket breast pocket.

Where, then, asks the girl, is the cream? The waiter leaves nothing to the imagination in answering this one.

Competing with the low entertainment are the sketches of stag movies, shown on a screen which drops in front of the main cur-

tain. Then, flickering daily before the hazy droop of apertured faces, appear some of the most prodigious physical endowments in the world, with graphic demonstrations of their use.

"This is probably the only public place in the world where such movies are shown," says Garcia. "So do not describe them in detail, for it would only cause difficulty."

Fearful that this fact may reflect on his native land, Garcia is quick to point out that some of the films are of domestic manufacture. "We obtain them from all over the world—New York, Paris, and Mexico City," he says.

Keeping a show on the boards is a grueling task for the staff and company of the Shanghai, because, says Garcia, "We change the show every day." The three-day schedule of performances is preceded by a full evening of rehearsals, in which the cast puts the next day's skits and dances in mind. To maintain the schedule calls for a company of

60 girls and a dozen men. In any one show, at least a dozen chorine, one or two principal dancers, and a half-dozen men may be involved.

"It is a difficult task, but we have never missed a performance in the 24 years we have been operating—except, of course, for revolutions," says Garcia.

Garcia says that the theater has been so successful lately, that plans are under way for construction of a new, modern house in another part of town.

"When the Fabes Bergren played the Rhapsody theater here earlier this year," he says, "They passed the house even though it is the world's largest theater in capacity."

A good Havana burlesque will vary out of the red as easily as a bad one, and we feel that nothing is too good for our customers. When they come expecting to see an artistic performance, we will give it to them."

The Shanghai is not without some problems. Garcia complains that showgirls are not easy to find. He says, "There is a small country and there are not many girls who are willing to appear naked."

★



"We'll complete about your head inter—my dish is on right now!"

I STRIPPED AT 16

(Continued from page 25)

The lounge had a marquee on the front, and the manager promised to put my name on it if I would do a strip act. I won't tell who he was because he knew how old I was, and he covered up for me. I suppose you could say I owe my career to him.

Anyhow, I asked him what I would have to do, and he said: "Honey, all you have to do is get up there and take it all, and when it's off, then shake who'll let."

I decided that would be kind of like dancing, which I'd always wanted to do, and maybe I could work into something better later on, so I took him up on it.

I was just two weeks past my 16th birthday.

I suppose that some people's eyebrows will droop right over those headlines when they read what I've just written.

Before they get too alarmed, I'd like to say something about show business of any kind, including the stripper circuit.

In some ways, we show people are funny folk. We work when most people are having a good time, and we sleep or have our hair while they're working. We travel a lot, and the rush and tension of showtime and having got in a kind of better outlook on life. But just because we are different, it doesn't mean we aren't human. In fact, if you ask me, I think a lot of show people are more filled with human kindness and brotherly love than a lot of the people who look down on them as kind of freaks.

And, in their own way, they are just as moral.

That's what I found when I started working. The boss wouldn't let me mix with the customers, although I was willing, partly because I didn't know what it was all about, and partly because I wanted to make a good impression on my first job.

And the other customers were careful to see to it that no one ever suggested a thing to me that was improper or off stage. Just because a girl takes her clothes off in front of people, it doesn't mean she wants to or is willing to do it anywhere and anytime.

Everyone wanted to see I didn't get hurt that way.

But in spite of this, my start wasn't easy. From the first, I ran with the same kind of pressure from older performers that I have met ever since.

There have been some wonderful people who are very dear to me for kindnesses they have done—Gloria Fennell, who calls me her "little baby doll," and Sheila "The Peeler" Ryan are two. But most of the older girls gave me the cold shoulder.

Even if I wasn't the beauty that my Aunt Jean was, I was still attractive enough to be embarrassing with my clothes off. Maybe some of them felt the threat in my youth.

I might say that girls today who start stripping have it a lot easier than I did. They often get good making—I had none but what I'd give myself in those bedroom practice sessions.

They also get good pay. Today a starting girl gets \$75 or \$100 a week, while only two or three half years ago I started at \$35 a week.

Now, however, I can command \$600 a week, while girls who are just starting at the same age, get only the starting pay. I am happy that my apprenticeship is over. Before

her salary day start to climb, a girl must learn a lot and I'm glad I did it before I reached 18.

One of my first and most important lessons came in Florida, where I went shortly after I started stripping. I was working down on the keys, when one night the manager came backstage after the show to tell me: "Jane, you ought to go back to St. Louis. You aren't ever going to get anywhere because all you can do is shake."

What he said was partly true. It was easy for me to shake, because I was so plump, and I did it most of the time.

"What people want," he told me, "is to see something shake that means something to them. Fat doesn't mean a thing, and unless you take off some of that stuff and get some new gimmicks into your act, you're going to get nowhere."

That started me on a diet that almost killed me.

In less than three months I dropped from 135 to 125 pounds. I did it by eating practically nothing—coffee and tea for breakfast, juice and salad for lunch, cottage cheese at night—and lots of exercise.

But to my great joy and surprise, my resemblance to Aunt Jean began to come back.

There was given one day when some rascals neighbor, apparently annoyed at the way grandmother I used to do in my back yard—I had a little cottage near Mama at the time, because I was working there—called the police.

I was busy doing the "bicycle" exercise with my legs in the air when the squad car came up. Two big policemen got out and came around to the yard, and explained they had come because of a complaint of indecent exposure.

I stood up as my bicycle fell and looked their straight in the eye and said: "I am a professional entertainer and I am doing my exercises. I do them every day and they are necessary to keep my job. Would you arrest an honest working girl for taking care of the tools of her trade?"

They just stood there and looked for a minute. Then one of them blushed and said:

"Well, it goes that right. He and his buddy went away, but I assured they drove past the house in the afternoon a good deal more often after that.

Indecent exposure indeed! I wonder what that neighbor would have said if she saw me at work!

There are many people who think that strippers must become immoral because they take their clothes off and often drink with the customers afterward. Let me tell you how I handled this problem when I first came up against it in New Orleans.

"You'll have to mix with the customers," my new boss said.

"But I don't drink," I protested.

"Yes, my sweet," he answered, "will learn."

I don't claim to have any great brain, any more than I claim to have a great talent. I just have a beautiful body and long platinum blonde hair. So it was easy for me to figure a way out of this one. I would be a real "dumb blonde."

It wasn't hard for me to put it on a little,

and he said dumb. This made it possible for me to just ignore any passes I didn't like. If a man had his hand on my knee, I'd advance the singing in his ring, or the shape of his fingers. I was too "dumb" to get the path.

When drinks came, I was even dumber.

I would look at a bottle of champagne—I never drank anything but champagne when I'm working—and say: "This is terrible. We don't want to drink that stuff!"

Well, that, I'd seen the bottle openly down in the ice bucket, and let it empty. The customer would be so surprised that he wouldn't know what to do until it was too late. Then I'd smile prettily at him. He couldn't be mad.

Sometimes when the second bottle came, I'd look at it, and say it wasn't any good either, and I'd throw it on the floor.

They'd mostly just look aghast, and say: "That's my baby. Beautiful, but ah, so dumb."

When I had to drink, I'd mostly just empty the glass on the floor while the customer wasn't looking. I'd go home sober, and the boss would be happy because I'd have used up more liquor than any two girls could drink. It got so that some of the rich customers used to come in and buy me drinks just to see what I'd do. They said it was worth it to love the money.

So I don't think my early start has had any effect on my morals at all. I'm really a home-body, and at the moment I'm very much involved with Ross D'Maggio, youngest of the famous baseball brothers. I wouldn't be, if my morals were bad.

Meanwhile, my career is going along just fine. I hope I'll be able to fill my Aunt Jean's shoes before long. Don't get me wrong. I don't want to ride on her fame. I want to be an individual and reach stardom on my own merits.

But there is another actress whose name I'd rather not mention who has been called "the second Jean Harlow" and has made a lot out of it. This turns me up. I think if anyone is going to be the second Jean Harlow, it should be me. After all, blond is thicker than water, and while I don't think anyone could top Aunt Jean, I feel that I am more closer.

My measurements are almost exactly hers—37-23-35; my eyes and hair are the same color, and I'm within a half inch of her height. And I think by the time I am 24—the age at which my Aunt Jean entered movies—I will be a seasoned performer and ready to do the same kind of job.

Meanwhile, I am going to do the best I know how in the burlesque field. A lot of famous performers have come from it. I realize it isn't exactly the latter career I dreamed of when I was a kid. But when I come on stage with my covered costume, and a big basket of American Beauty roses to throw to the audience, the applause is wonderful. And there's no more wonderful sound in the world.

Show business is show business, and even that I'm in it, I don't think it matters much how I get here. At least I didn't have to do any favors for my producers, if you know what I mean.

And the best years of my life—and my career—are still ahead of me. *

SOCIALITE STRIPPER

(Continued from page 41)

enter the debaucher world, Mrs. Martin saw to it that her beautiful youngster was given just about every private lesson a girl could have and still have time to sleep and catch an occasional meal. She was taught ballet, acrobatics, piano, violin, singing, tap dancing, elocution and, at paramount importance to Mrs. Martin, poise, posture, and the social graces.

With a complete set of instructions memorized, Brandy shyly found himself in the whirlpool of debauchery by the time she was 17. Her awkward-kissness had given way to the seductive lines she has today, six years later. She recalls now, "Mother had her heart set on my getting into the Four Hundred and somehow it didn't seem sane to tell her I'd have been just as satisfied working to make enough to pay for a room of my own in New York, just as long as I could be near show business. Daddy sort of understood that it was never very happy in this social-climbing stuff, but he didn't do much about it. He was away from home on business a great deal of the time anyway."

Playing the social register role consisted chiefly of attending and giving parties for the children of the rich, of dining, riding, sailing, and keeping company with boys who had what Brandy longingly called "wooden personalities." She finally decided "there was enough on the evening she was told, second hand, that she was regarded to be married."

"That was pretty close to the last affair," she says. "It was something smack out of the dark ages, where marriages were arranged without the girl's even knowing about it. I came back to Philadelphia after a weekend in Manhattan where I'd been dating a boy who was just starting out as a television, and I was great to understand that a party was to be held in a fellow I had engaged the engagement of myself and a fellow I'd seen—usually in a crowd—about ten times. His parents were high in Pennsylvania society. They were awfully well to do, and they and my mother got their heads together and decided it would be a happy match."

"That did it. I packed only a few things and ran to New York."

There was a period of tension after Brandy arrived in Gotham. Strathmore, desperate to be independent, she had few friends in the city, fewer contacts. She reviewed the miserably slender lessons she'd been taught by the endless stream of tutors and agreed with one friend that she did, in fact, have what it might take to be an acrobatic dancer. Still work no other stage of where she was headed, she went after bookings and found work. First acrobatics she moved on to chorus line after chorus line and toured Europe, Mexico, Canada, Panama and the West Indies, slowly but carefully building her name. Not once did she fall back on her family for money or encouragement.

It was when she was persuaded that strip pay for a living would get her the independence she'd always sought that she began to feel sure of herself. "I'd never seen a strip scene before," she remembers, "or even known much about it. But I made a point of watching some of the top names, decided

I had the shape and stage poise, and that was it. The embarrassment of taking my clothes off for agents' kids' last long at all."

Nor did her amateur standing. Following her very first appearance in her new career, Walter Winchell wrote, "Brandy Martin will give Lily St. Cyr competition as a stripper." That fanned it, for she was besieged with offers within the next week and discovered she could choose the creamiest cuts from the top.

Soon then, the busty blue-eyed beauty has been no-time mover and crawler to the top. In her first season at Minsky's she earned marriage money and has already appeared at every important strip party in the country.

She's a quiet, serious girl who neither hides nor flaunts her family background. She has definite likes and dislikes. She dines as often as time allows, but the same lady killer is in for a huge letdown. She likes a good conversationalist who knows

books and paintings, but the man talked as ego will get the instant glare.

She's a summer outdoor enthusiast who loves boating, her own inboard engine bears her name. Between grid and lamp cage means you'll see her sunbathing or water skiing along Long Island Sound. She discovers historical events at an amazing speed. Generally her before hours person is plus topography and she's strong for the Available Light technique with her Leica M3.

Today Brandy is riding the crest. There was a point of time in which her parents—particularly her mother—were concerned that having a stripper as a daughter was akin to having a whore in the family, but they have since changed themselves, with accepting her wishes, maybe because for the first time in her life Brandy is doing exactly what she wants to do.

"It's funny," Brandy says, "to remember how Mother concentrated so hard on having me learn how to use my body gracefully. It should only know I'd be taking that education in time and become a dancer with it. I'm pretty sure she would've found a tutor to teach me bookkeeping instead." *

ARE EUROPEAN SINGERS SEXIER?

(Continued from page 34)

and bare around, that the south of her is also a decided asset. She attempts the seductive now and then to give out an evening gown, low and sensual. Her sense of humor is richly underscored. She is an accomplished artist with her double entendre songs.

Away from the microphone her very loss for life is still as evident. She's healthy and outbreathing in her past do more. While there's a lot of comedy in her, she's not a Martha Raye, for instance. As she quips, she seems to be building over with all the physical aspects of youth, you can't escape the feeling that she can be touched off easily, that her sensuous is every bit as genuine as her wit.

When her full schedule, Monique finds time for dates, and has been courted by the Marquis of Milford Haven, Francois Truffaut, Prince Christian of Hannover and Rex Harrison. Her stars for good dates are fairly eclectic: she likes theater, dancing, and dinner at Twenty One, but an angelic will enjoy dancing blue jeans and a sweater (a sight no student of shapeliness should miss) and making love to Eddie Condon's the Village Vanguard, or the Bohemian to hear musicians moving past. She's definite in her pronouncements of what an eligible man should have:

"Most importantly, he shouldn't have debts. He doesn't have to be dark or have bulging biceps, necessarily. But if he isn't any kind of man to look at, he should at least be my kind of millions."

Monique's first break in show business came when the late John Murray Anderson, that astute showman, was casting pretty and well-developed girls for his Broadway production of "Alfonsine," a few seasons back. His attention was riveted to the tall doll from Brussels whose face seemed so flawless and whose figure seemed so impressively perfect, that he talked with her for only three minutes and then signed her on the spot. It didn't matter that her singing voice (which she attributed to Anderson was "very small but very pleasant") would never threaten the likes of Shore or Staf-

fani, or that her acting talents wouldn't even challenge the Misses Hayes or Barrymore. Monique was startlingly beautiful. Anderson watched her long her laugher greatest across a stage and knew she had an immense future.

He was right. Now blonde Monique, who until "Alfonsine" had necked with fans chiefly as the villainess in a French movie and as a TV led to Abbott and Costello, is today the darling of newspaper columnists who can always count on scandal and provocative quotes from her, and all stage and supper club audiences who feel as if some date rapport with her when she steps before them to sing at close. Since her Broadway debut her rise has been little short of Monique frenetic. Her two-week engagement stretched to five at the elegant Manhattan in New York. She had indoor engagements at the Ritz-Carlton in Montreal, Chez Gerard in Quebec City, the Thandorbert in Las Vegas, the Chase's Starlight Roof in St. Louis, and the Moulin Rouge in Hollywood—where she headlined at nearly numbers such as "If I Could Tell You In English What I Think Of You In French." She has a second LP record album on the Reprise label called "Monique At The Moulin Rouge."

Show business was not Monique's original ambition. The innocent Monique first came to the United States as an exchange student and studied law at New York University. She had dabbled in theatrics in Europe, having appeared in Brecht's famed "1900: The Year" in 1946 at the age of 15, but for the most part ignored the offers of Belgian producers who wooed at the thought of all that publicity being devoted to Dismay Monique's lessons.

Her interest in law dissolved though in 1949 when she met and married an American engineer. When that marriage swiftly failed, she left both him and this country to return to Europe, where she was instantly spotted by Italian director Vittorio DeSica ("Bicycle Thief") in the lobby of the La-

Robert Hurd in Rome. DeSica, whose principles matched only by his impulsiveness, asked Monique if she had ever been in the movies. She said no and, in fact, had no particular ambitions at that direction. The director insisted that she meet him the next day, within a month she was playing a part in his "Tomorrow Is Too Late"—the film which also introduced Pier Angeli.

"Tomorrow" was expected to flourish as a wave of heavy publicity, and Monique, caught by critics for her exquisite beauty, was caught in that wave and brought back home.

She married again, this time to Kurt Phinogen, president of Marck cement mine, and while she waited for the movie offers to start pouring forth, she contented herself with the placid postwar life in the embankment section of New York's East Side. For no reason she can sensibly explain today, she enrolled at Columbia University and studied philosophy and Egyptology. "It happened to see the name 'Egyptology' in the university brochure," she remarks, "and it sounded like such a pretty word."

Around the time her second marriage found itself in its last days, something had become a nagging memory, and Monique VanVeen entered it, with good luck. First David Sol Lesser happened to see her wig gliding somewhere between Rod Abbott and Lou Costello in the Colgate Comedy Hour and asked her to appear with Les Barker in a saga called "Tarnish and the She Devil."

Asked what role she played, Monique answered, "I didn't play Tarnish."

After what she refers to as "that very exciting job" (and it's difficult to believe that even a herd of elephants could flatter her), Monique returned to New York and television. With Tarnish behind her, Monique embarked on her new career as chanteuse and proved once again that when it comes to projecting sex, the European girls have what it takes—even if it's not a singing voice. She is the embodiment of the doctrine that European singers are sexier than our home-grown kind. *

TROPICS CLUB

(Continued from page 18)

His favorite act is Dorra, his young and attractive wife who, when she is not at home sending their daughter, swimming pool, Thunderbolt and Cadillac, plays the Electro-quad and sings light operas at the Tropics.

There has been the rumor, occasionally verified in certain parts of the country, that night club swamping is on the way out. Asked about it, Warren St. Thomas said, "I think it's done for if enough customers are convinced that the strip is presented for the sole purpose of taking their money away from them. If a patron's drinks are wasted while he's watching the strip, and if the girls are forced to so much to take their clothes off as to remember him into spending money on some later on at the bar, then he's a jerk naturally, for allowing the whole resistance to prosper."

"But we don't bother with 'morning' at the Tropics, and we always give a customer his money's worth. As long as there's an interest in class strip-tease, in an atmosphere of class, there'll be the Tropics."

The countless numbers of customers who pour in night after night would seem to back this up. *

RESTAURANT OF THE MONTH

The Lesters

THE ONLY really authentic Creole restaurant north of New Orleans, the Lesters, is 23 miles from Times Square at 2000 Long Beach Road in Island Park, Long Island. Its menu is composed solely of French Creole dishes. Guests never take one away as a souvenir for they are six feet tall, somewhat bulky to conceal under a jacket.

The exterior view is eye-catching and appealing. The dainty lace of iron over the flower-decked balcony is decorative, a touch of the French from New Orleans. The Italian Rose Garden is alluring and fragrant and the gay colors of this large citadel of calories literally pulls in clients.

The Family Dining Room is gracious. The antique copper collection has a soft sheen and the oil paintings on the walls, hand-painted trays, collectible items, good luck candle arbors of the Castle of Santa Cecilia, items collected on world tours of the owners, serve to supply the decor of this popular room. It makes dining a time for relaxation, for the enjoyment of fine Creole food.

There's the Supper Club Room, where the walls are velvet-black, the chandeliers a study in gold and crystal and the seats comfortable. This is for leisurely dining, a deluxe atmosphere that literally calls for champagne, lots of it!

The Sarsen Bar is memorable. There is a friendly fireplace at one end and the atmosphere is subdued but enormously cheerful. You sample from an endless array of hors d'oeuvre trays, and if you miss the moonshade dig, you have overlooked something indescribably delightful and stimulating.

Lester Sernay, handsome and distinguished, presides in the large and busy kitchen, personally inspects every dish that is sent to a customer. If it fails to pass his critical inspection, someone gets shamed in no uncertain terms.

An ex-Army man, Lester knows the words and the music. He was with General Patton, got badly mowed up by an exploding shell that did unpleasant things to his legs, hospitalized him for a long time. He used the words then, just as he can now. He has a great affection for the guests, many of whom have been steady and enthusiastic guests since the restaurant started. He insists that they have the best.

For them, he prepares such exotic dishes as flaming duck with wild rice and a tart cherry brandy sauce, a delightful and succulent item. The boneless capon is a thing of joy, ceremoniously served, and if your taste runs to a chateaubrand, it arrives on an oak plank, each slice juicy and red, an epicure's favorite. It's garnished with Creole rice in a ring, the conger filled with sautéed mushroom caps. The Creole bouillabaisse is heartening and sustaining. The tab is reasonable—not too expensive for what you get.

The cellar is ample. If in doubt, consult Magee Sernay, the other half of the team that owns this lush establishment. She is the dynamic, charming and most hospitable hostess who makes you feel at home, hovers over your table, sees that the service is nothing less than perfect. She has a way with herbs, and the appealing flavors of the foods owe much to the herbs she grows and tends so competently.

The food is superior, the atmosphere friendly and cheerful. Naturally it attracts crowds, but a table can always be found. —HARRY ROTHSCHILD



Lester Sernay

ALL-AMERICAN INSTITUTION OF BOURBON

(Continued from page 26)

wad their way downward to the bulk of the liquid. The slower they pass, the richer the bourbon. A full-bodied bourbon appears almost only.

The crystal glass is another phase of the ceremonial ritual. The glass is emptied, permitted to stand at room temperature for an hour or so. Then the judge raises the glass and swirls. If the true fragrance of bourbon is well strong, rich, delicate and full it has been a quality bourbon.

The palm is yet another mandatory phase. A few drops of the bourbon is poured on the palm and they are briskly rubbed together. Bury the nose in the palm and swirl. If the aroma and characteristic fragrance is almost weak, the Bourbon has become inert.

The sip is the final, most delicate of tests. The bourbon is stirred with an equal part of pure water. The judge takes a small bowl, takes it around in his mouth, sways every hidden flavor, swirls it and feels its great warmth flow gently through his body.

This is bourbon judged critically in Kentucky.

Today's Bourbon is all bottled, a method that came into being on the complaint of a physician. The early in the long competitive rivalry of distillery competition, the great use of some unscrupulous vendors of dipping a finger length of chewing tobacco into the keg to give it a stronger flavor, had caused the doctor to cause his practice of recommending a day of bourbon to certain of his patients. Harriet Davidson, welcomed this new bottle trend. The government came along with tax stamps that sealed the bottles and the purchase was given a virtual guarantee that the contents of the bottle were unadulterated. The era of dilution and mockery was ended.

Essentially, the producers of bourbon distill along a specified pattern—but with definite nuances from the moon. Otherwise all bourbons would taste alike. They don't. Selected ground corn is washed, goes into a grinder, is covered with limestone water, processed at low temperatures, then driven into "mash tubs" or converters where it is blended with the alcoholized stillage from a previous distillation and cooled.

The rye is added, when the mash cools to 142 degrees, the mash is added. The temperature is kept at 142 degrees to permit the enzymes in the mash to convert the grains into maltose sugars, the only form in which the yeast can utilize natural glucose. Thereafter, the materials are subjected to our real testicles, and it flows through scientific engineered apparatus. At long last it emerges as a raw whiskey which is piped in a large retaining tank in the distillery room, out to barreling proof by the addition of sufficient deionized water.

Next the cheapest bourbon goes into the new, charred white oak barrels. The barrels are sealed in an area where there is no sun or water. The temperature and humidity is carefully and accurately controlled, as quality is checked from time to time.

The barrel's interior is of vital importance in this business of aging bourbon. The staves and heads are made of local white

oak and are slow charred over a precisely timed and controlled burner to a desired depth. The barrels of bourbon chamber perfectly for the prescribed times at the desired proof. It is then cut to the standard barrel proof with distilled water before it is bottled.

The bourbon judge will tell you that the great labels in the modern history of fine Bourbons are Ancient Age, Beehive, J. W. Harp, Jack Daniel, James E. Pepper, Kentucky Brd, Kentucky Tarr, Mr. Park, Mr. Tallent, Old Charter, Old Crow, Old Fitzgerald, Old Forester, Old Granddaddy, Old Taylor, Walker's Deluxe and Walker's Private Cellar, Virginia Gentleman, Wild Turkey and Yellowstone. He has tried them all.

If the Bourbon judge is in a good mood, he will ask you to have a true Kentucky moist pulp. And he may say disparaging things about the judge made elsewhere, say

MOST ELITE NIGHT CLUBS

(Continued from page 3)

into. But once he's in—or even when he's not yet in—he is at one or another of his dozens of telephones doing State Club business. If not engaged in running his joint, Billingsley's only other distractions are concerned with Sorlight perfume—a production offshoot of the club. Billingsley is almost antagonistic toward all other business ventures. A former real estate operator, he still has several pieces of midwestern property, but he seems vaguely annoyed when called upon to negotiate the sale of any of these, or even to consider leasing them.

As to personal backgrounds, Billingsley and Perona have possibly one thing in common. Both are self-educated. Billingsley freely confesses that he had exactly four years of American grammar school education. Perona vaguely admits to elementary schooling, which is the only of his bookish couldn't have been much more than four full semesters. Perona is reticent about his background, but admits that he came to this country as a youth after apprenticeship as a bookie in London and Paris restaurants. Thus, at least, puts Perona in the lifetime restaurant class. Not so with Billingsley. The latter loudly remembers his first job in Ford, Oklahoma, at the age of seven. His older brothers had given him a toy wagon. He could do with it as he liked provided he earned out one daily share. Each day he had to cart his wagon with a covered load of "soda pop" down to the Indian reservation and sell the bottles to the Cheyennes. Selling fireworks to Indians was, and still is, unconstituted. Thus, Billingsley, at seven years of age, was possibly the youngest boot-legger in our history.

Perona knows and knows about his chunk up the social and speakeasy ladder. He refers openly to places he ran during prohibition. Contemporaries remember him, in the old days, as a leading light in the social affairs of the Club. Sorlight, better known as the dried Mads. During prohibition he had speaks in the West midtown streets and it was in one of these, in the long ago era when Louis Angel Furgo was long to fight Jack Dempsey, that he met Furgo and Furgo's friends. As a consequence, Perona has held

them gently but firmly. Watch him carefully as he prepares each separate pulp—this is educational. It can be useful.

He will probably use a plain, elderly, even-ohr pulp mug, the traditional canister. It's the same size, top to bottom, it has little in the way of decorations, aside from minor dangles that may be regarded as server stripes. He carefully removes the leaves from two sprigs of leaf mint. These are placed in the mug with 1 tablespoon of water, 1/2 teaspoon of powdered sugar, gently heated. Then a jigger of bourbon is added, the glass is filled with shaved ice. A long spoon is inserted and twirled firmly until the outside of the silver mug is covered with the white rime of frost. The only air such is a full spray of fresh mint. As you sip with deep appreciation, your nose is lightly buried in the fragrant mist.

You'd better say that's it's the best moist pulp ever tasted. (Burr, you know!) Besides, a really is superior. The mixer deserves praise. Also, it's one way to guarantee a refill! *

the rack and complained South American trade through all his years of saloon operation.

Billingsley's career took an entirely different tangent. He ran drug stores. He operated gambling. He bought and sold real estate, as did his older brothers. He followed them to New York. He boasts now that he never was and is not now very "smart" but that he always had a shabby pride in not allowing himself to fail in any undertaking. Back in 1928, two running friends from Oklahoma desired to get into the booze and food business. Billingsley found them a spot in West Side street. An opening time drew near, the friends became a little nervous. They were weary boys in the big town. They asked Billingsley to come in on the operation as a sort-of partner. Billingsley agreed.

Sitting around the empty room that was the first of three State Clubs, Billingsley got more and more restless. He would, not he, decided, find an emphasis as simple as the speakeasy business. He bought out one old friend and then the other. He was in the saloon business alone and he was, although it was doubtful that he thought so at the time.

Billingsley, soon thereafter, moved his West Side spot, soon fairly famous, to his first East Side location. He abandoned that spot, in East 51st Street, because "it was too much up and down stairs." With 1933 and repeal, he took a store in East 53rd Street. A series of vindictive accidents occurred. Both clubs failed. Everything fell in place for both Perona and Billingsley. However, it is doubtful that the longer, old-fashioned saloon story can be applied to either of these traits of their time.

Consider, for instance, the origin of the names each man decided upon for his own saloon. Perona persisted on such names as the Desert and the Sahara and the Sands. His decorator, meanwhile, had written out a design of blue and white aging stripes for banquets and background. These reminded Perona of Maroon, for some reason, and of auras, for yet another hazy reason. He thought of the Zebra Club and, of course,

the Morocco Club. Now, at its entrance lined either side at the time, there was a successful night club called El Patio. Perena moved to El Morocco.

"To this day," Perena admits with wonder, "some of my oldest customers think I put the El before Morocco because the Third Avenue Elevated was just a few yards down the street."

When Billingsley was about to throw open the doors of his first West Side night club, he conferred with these captives of women who were turning to down the faded shop house of James "Duffy" Moore. They discussed names for the joint, considering this or that Frenchy and fanciful title. Billingsley suggested that for no reason at all he published the Stark Club label from out of the chair adorning art.

"Today," he now says slowly and sadly, "I realize that I should have long since dreamed up a romantic and colorful story about the birth of the name. But I haven't. I just never did know why I picked out that name."

Perena opened his doors in 1931. El Morocco was an immediate success. It drew the class trade from the first night. It is still drawing it. Billingsley had a slightly harder row to hoe. He punched hard for more than a year, using every kind of imaginative and provocative promotional gimmick before the Stark caught fire. But when it caught fire, a fairly rapid fire.

For more than 20 years El Morocco and the Stark have been New York's one two night club, often in either order. For all that time they have shared the hard case of the class customers, the celebrities, and the solid rich. And today the two sponsored systems who run these places with iron fists and hard heads are as far apart in operational methods as they are in background and characteristics.

"We never give away anything in El Morocco," says Perena, a note of contempt for each industry in his voice. "We feel that gifts would undermine our customers."

Billingsley, on the other hand, will frequently give a guest with gifts of perfume, lipstick, champagne and other favors in an amount, even at wholesale price, which would be triple or quadruple the guest's potential check.

"I did it as a pique and on plan," says Billingsley calmly. "I knew what I was doing."

So means each man in his own, dreamed way. The only striking part of the whole thing, of course, is that Perena and Billingsley are not dealing with a separate set of favored customers. It's basically the same set. It is also quite possible that both founders are dead right. Each to his own taste, that is. It might, indeed, embarrass anybody to be pined with gifts in El Morocco, although the same somebody would be equally disgusted if ignored when Billingsley started loading him on the tablecloth. It's the difference in what the same customer has been trained to expect—either nothing or a lot.

Perena is happily volatile as to his personal relationships with customers. It is probable that he thinks of himself as a humanist and not. His now laugh breaks out when he remembers the time Woodworth Donahoe, the playboy whose antics have loosed a generation of saloon and hotel keepers, crawled into the hooded room and

sneaked and hid himself peeked around from table to table one early morning. Perena, who will involuntarily crowd when any one looms, no matter how famous, comes through the door in an apron jacket or even light colored vest, can also gaily recall the details of the time Michael Flannery, sometime husband of Hollywood queen, accused that the boy from the men's room bring shaving materials to his prominent table so that he could shave himself before dinner—and did same. Perena is one of the few men alive who seriously thought, and still thinks, that the sight of Miss Bar, the former heavyweight champion, wrestling under tables and making lighted matches in the shoes of female or representatives—in short, applying the chain saw "hot foot" which is now bloodily cut of fashion—was one of the truly hilarious comedy bits in all history.

Such impulsive antics would give rival Sherman Billingsley an immediate triple coronary thrombosis. This bawdy rough house is, however, Perena's escape valve from his own rules, regulations and disciplinary methods.

As the years gather on him, his personal temper seems to be cooling, but when he was younger and even more nervous he never needed a loquacious in any of his cafes. Once he appeared before agitators for personally belting out awfully or insulting customers. It is to his credit, he is noted, that in both cases the customers he belated was celebrities whose existence would have created every a tougher burden of more untidy record.

Sell-made influences that he laughably is, Perena's business methods and his brain cut thinking over the years also offer an odd unsuitable piece to the picture puzzle of the man's character. There can be no doubt that he knows the restaurant and club business. He is shrewd and resourceful in all his outside business dealings. Yet he rented the rooms which contain El Morocco in 1931 and, throughout the growth of the club's success, he never undertaken the landlord and purchased the premises. He first rented the location for \$350 a month. Today, 24 years later, he cringes guiltily when he admits to paying \$2,500 a month. He doesn't know exactly what he'd do if the landlord decided, when his lease is up, to tear down the building and erect a skyscraper or office or apartment structure.

El Morocco runs like one of those well-lubricated and carefully integrated racing ovens so close to his heart. Until his recent death, a headwater known to the social world as Carina stood at the entrance page with the assistance of a Marlene doll suggest and analytical talent of a 1930 psychiatrist. Carina, like all good headwaters, was glib with a customer's eye, tact and tact, and a talent over more rare. He was a genius at what the trade calls "dressing" the room. Dressing, to the trade, means sporting customers to the best possible advantage.

Why Carina did it the way he did is as comprehensible as why he called himself Carina, which was his middle name, instead of Frank or Bernard, which were his Christian and surname. But, like Perena, he established a new order by breaking some of the old and unwritten rules of the club game.

Every man of the headwater, trained in the sartorial can traps of prohibition, still works by an effective, if somewhat stale,

rule of thumb: put the dressed customers at the fronted tables. This basic philosophy was worked at El Morocco by the now-forgotten headwater who preceded Carina. When Carina succeeded to the club's rope handle, he had had time to study the physical qualities of El Morocco and decide it was indeed time that the old order be changed. With his analyst's eye he had seen that the best, the most romantic, the most private tables at El Morocco were not those choosing the dance floor—where one was expected and the dance floor show off might easily spill a goblet of champagne down nobody's grille—but instead were the backwater banquettes along the wall facing the smokers. These tables—again by the accident of design—were so fashioned that one must have almost a direct view to identify the occupant.

It is a further credit to Perena's perception that immediately he agreed with his first lieutenant. As a result, the club became the town's "best dressed" room. In Morocco it works like this: You can dance around the floor twice, gawking for famous faces, before you realize that while the women as all the people at the cigarette table must be wealthy, the raffish girl talking quietly at that curved banquette is nobody else but Rita Hayworth. And you may make several rounds of the dance floor before you do a double take to stare your self that the fellow with the baldish head, and smoking a pipe, is Bing Crosby. Or that the thin woman is the Duchess of Windsor. El Cien. It is necessary to search for the famous at El Morocco, which makes for fascinating gossip.

"It's the terrible way, here," Perena says firmly. "Because, for one thing, we have no show in wait. The best people should be made most comfortable. Anybody who wants cigarette can have it, of course."

Few of the favored customers want it. Perena claims that he has no rules of attendance or rejection, that over the years he has built an atmosphere which, almost at the door, discourages the overly or the low-life. He thinks his room is such a combination of beauty, dignity, and essential stability that only a host will insist on entrance when such entrance is frowned upon. And if there is one thing the El Morocco staff—Carina trained—can recognize and then tolerate, it is a host. El Morocco, like all famous saloons, has had its full share of brash and blundering and attempted head-games have been either social or lawless. This always takes some of the stag off sometimes it adds just a touch of exciting glamor.

Perhaps the only truly laughable incident in Morocco's history came one night during the war. A soldier from a Spanish band doled in town, wandered into the Cham page Room (the club's handholding and romantic off room) and hid himself in order of chicken and, at home, a couple of bottles of good red wine. When the 180 check was presented, the order topped a panther's plea and was handed off to night cook.

"I thought from the name it was a Span ish restaurant," he told the magistrate through an interpreter. The cook wisely dismissed the case.

"For sixty dollars in El Morocco," smiled the learned judge, "this defendant probably didn't cheat the place out of much more than a club sandwich."

Incidentally, there can be no honest comparison between El Morocco and the Stock Club. With a hard push, Morocco seats 600 persons in the main room and the Champagne Room. With a push of about equal strength, Billingsley can seat a bit over 1,000 customers in the two floors which contain two complete and separate night clubs under the one title of the Stock Club. As noted, El Morocco's first customer ready shows he has 6 p.m. The Stock is open for lunch and is steadily in business until the final minute of the 4 p.m. closing deadline. It is as well to compare the two clubs as to gross income or profits as it is to compare the daily habits of the owners.

To find Sherman Billingsley at any time during the afternoon requires merely a short wait on the telephone. One of several phone girls knows exactly whether Mr. Billingsley will be in to the caller and, if so, at exactly what time. One then appears at the Stock and announces himself. A day manager swoops into a phone and tells the caller to please take the elevator to a numbered floor in the building.

There are eight floors in the Stock Club and every one of them, like the building itself, belongs to Billingsley. Whichever floor "the Boss" is on when he receives you, there will be a girl or a dinner jacketed rap-tan to meet you at the elevator and deliver you to the mezzanine. No matter which floor it is, a telephone will be at the mezzanine's elbow. He will probably be drinking clear soups or coffee and, even more probably, he will be going through papers and dictating or memorizing memoranda. At the first sign of encouragement, he will dress in all undervests and personally conduct the visitor through a building which begins on the ground floor, with the rear of the night club operation and ends on the top floor, with what amounts to a small factory.

Entering through the steepled portals of the Stock Club from the common street, you are adapted to the club not by a man at a rope. Nothing as graceful. The Stock does not have a velvet rope. It has a chain of 18-ounce gold.

The seventh floor is the most interesting. This is the Boss's own. It tells much about him. It has a couch and club chairs for visitors. There is a phone in every corner. There is a closet with twenty newly pressed "working" suits, all of a light-weight, elastic material in solid colors running through the light shades (the somers) in the richer dark tones (the waders). In a tiny anteroom a maid works several hours a day spinning and pressing the Billingsley wardrobe. A closet holds a hundred neckties on hangers. There are two avenue bedrooms filled with white shirts and underswear and socks. Dozens of conservative shoes stand like soldiers in their rows. There is also a small safe for unimportant money, and a larger safe for more important money. Also a money-counting machine. Just off the small room which contains those temporary money repositories is an even smaller room with a single, unimpressive bed which the boss uses when he wants to sleep over for the night.

Billingsley leads the visitor through this home away from home with his slow, almost swerving gait. His balding head is slightly cocked to one side. His voice is characteristically low pitched and almost nasal. He has

more of Person's enthusiasm and yet, strangely, he seems to have far deeper conviction in what he says and does. Only when he comes to the smallest of all the seventh floor rooms does his voice and manner show any real interest. This room is a small bathroom with an old-fashioned tub gilded by a roofing board and various insouciant ornaments.

"See this thing here?" he demands, his voice rising slightly. "When a guy opens a house, just this is the first thing he ought to install for himself. A bathtub. I got in that thing and pour on the water and fifteen minutes does me more good than a full night's sleep."

On matters which, over the years, he has considered and decided to his own satisfaction, he is direct and eloquent.

"I'll tell you why I give away so many presents," he said recently. "I have a rich wife plan. I can tell early in the night whether I'm going to have a good night or a bad night. I decide I'm going to have a bad night, maybe take a small loss. All right, I tell myself, if I've got a losing night I'll make it a real one. There's a few people sitting around the tables. I read them champagne and perfume and neckties. I hand them up. I was going to lose \$100 on the night, anyway. This way I lose \$500."

He paused to smile a secret smile for his own understanding only.

"So," he continued, "the customers go away. The next day do they say, 'I was in the Stock Club last night and the game was empty?' They do not. Next day they say, 'I was in the Stock last night and Billingsley sent champagne and perfume and God knows what all. How does he do it?' The place must be making a million. That's one reason why I give presents."

There are other reasons.

"I've noticed one thing," he confides. "A bar or a room may be filled. Then three or four people leave. Then somebody else leaves. It's catching. Pretty soon everybody scuttles out. The idea is to stop the cascade. The way to do that is to start buying drinks. That keeps them in their chairs."

There are still other reasons for the Billingsley goodhandiness.

"How much does Dorothy Lamar charge for a guest appearance?" he once asked a newspaperman.

"Oh," said the writer, "probably not less than \$15,000."

"Well," said the delighted Billingsley, "to night she's making a guest appearance here for nothing."

The newspaperman asked how and who. "I just sent two magazines of champagne to her table," explained Sherman. "It will take Dorothy and her party more than two hours to drink that much wine."

Like many another scepticism and carefully contained personality, a volcano of irritability and violent belligerency smolders thinly below the Billingsley shell. A lava of rage pours forth almost every time Billingsley feels called upon to write a note to any employee or associate about almost anything. As often as his spoken orders and requests may be, his written complaints or provocations sound as though they came direct from the headless boss of a waterfront union. The walls of the main kitchen, in the cellar of the club, are literally papered with bulletins from the Boss. They are

all signed with the initials "S.B." Written on an average typewriter in letters almost an inch high, the messages deal with such terrible complaints and wailing complaints. All lines are thus in constant state of vibration. The inkblotting goes about like this:

"God Damn! I'm Sick of a Black! Black Double Black! Obscurity, More Obscurity! How many times have I told you that when a customer, etc., etc., etc." These masses of flaming rage, to the casual eye all concerning matters of infinitesimal importance, are found in odd socks and corners of all floors of the club building. Recently Billingsley brought a puppy from his farm in the country, intending to give it away to some customer who fell in love with it, and proceeded to fill it in love with the puppy himself. He kept it in a secretary's office off his own suite. One afternoon the pup covered as he strayed out to assess it. Billingsley was convinced that the puppy had kicked or bit the puppy. He ran for a strip of wrapping paper and sent a footman scurrying for a paint brush and black ink. The resulting sign, four feet wide and stuck to the wall with tacks, read:

"God Damn! I'm Sick of a Black! Black! I told you I'll hit or kick back, S.B." More and more, as these pieces, Billingsley spends longer hours in his suite on the seventh floor of his building. There are nights, he admits, when he won't go downstairs on less something "tells" for his presence. When he is downstairs he gives the impetus of his time to the Club Room and, then, is usually at Table 50 with Walter Winchell. Winchell, among other things, is probably the most undependable press agent of all time. For years and years he has been boosting, lauding and deflating the nightly happenings of the club. He has never made a dime from the club nor even participated in Billingsley's rare outside business ventures—although Winchell is always eager to plug these too.

"Winchell has been my greatest friend," Billingsley says slowly. "If I ever lost him, I would lose something of great importance. I think, too, that I've been valuable to Walter. I think if anything happened to me he'd lose something valuable, too."

Billingsley contends that he does not give Winchell stories or news tips because he doesn't know a story or a news tip when he hears one. He would be telling merely what the columnist and what he has just heard from some national or international figure rarely goes unnoticed by Winchell.

The clean-cut young American type is the type of customer Billingsley most wants. He despises the cruise, the exotic and the foreign types. He has a sort of phobia about true blue American characters. These he instinctively recognizes and accepts under the general description of "good people." The goods type runs his huckles and he is completely allergic to Latin. Billingsley would far prefer to have such wholesome and honest American types as adonises Hal Heywood starlets or over age magazine cover girls in his saloon than he would such a supposedly foreign celebrity as Aly Khan. Something warns him that none of the "good people" would wear their hair as long as Aly Khan's or hair striped suits of such an income on.

An example of his attitude toward The Outsider happened a few years ago when an

old customer called him and said he wanted a saddle for himself and party. The party would include the Maharajah of Jaipur, one of the richest Indians present in the world. "I don't want none of these colored men in here," said Billingsley daily.

The customer, angry, pointed out that the Maharajah is not only one of the world's richest men but also one of the most important men in the East.

"He's still colored," Billingsley insisted, ending the conversation.

It is perhaps disconcerting to report that the Maharajah was taken to El Morocco where Perna presently takes the place after trying to suppress and entertain him. But, then, of course, Perna is also a "foreigner" in Billingsley's eyes. And the Maharajah was just another rich demand Indian. Sher was Billingsley knows a lot about Indians from his early days in Oklahoma. He works on the ancient householder's theory that the only good Indian is a dead Indian. Sher's only defense from this line of philosophy is that, for him, it gets double for his

own Indians who come to his spot.

In common with Moroney, the Stock is a place where hilarious accidents or truly humorous incidents are apt to occur. Years ago, however, a forgotten drunk swamered the bar in his own bar.

Billingsley has always insisted that every male on the club wear a sequent or well-known Indian costume-like King County, for instance—a neckline will be found or over given you. On the occasion mentioned above, a young playboy arrived without a tie. Billingsley was strict. He released him customer until he had gone somewhere and gotten himself a suitable necktie. The glibly youth left dutifully and returned in half an hour with a handsome necktie. Billingsley smiled and forgave. The necktie entered quietly, almost too quietly.

It wasn't until almost an hour later that a hooded captain reported that the playboy was gaily dancing on the Stock Club floor—in his bare feet!



HIGH PRIEST OF ROCK 'N' ROLL

(Continued from page 26)

the generally agreed answer goes like this: "They work like pole dancers from the second they start and they're completely drained. They're certainly not flashy musicians but they have a sense of rhythm—or at least a sense of rock and roll rhythm, which means a steady and overpowering beat. They're show men."

"They come along at the psychological moment when teenagers were looking for a kind of jump music that would dig right in and throw the lot of their net frustrations. The Comets play up to this, whether they're conscious of this or not. They fill the need in spots, and make a hell of a lot of money doing it."

Halley himself steadfastly denies that the songs he and his men offer have any relation to hot and heavy sex urges. Suggest this to him and he'll defensively state that there is nothing inherently about R & R. He insists that "Rock Around The Clock," for instance, is not suggestive, and pledges to rewrite any lyrics which in his estimation would otherwise make for erotic allusions. "I can't understand why they write certain lyrics," he says. "The music is the main thing and it's just an easy to write acceptable words. Times with objectionable phrases often are banned by radio stations is, among other reasons, it would just seem good business sense not to write them that way."

Since the "Rock Around The Clock" record, so work has gone by without a Halley record on the best-selling lists. He turned down a \$6,000 offer to appear on a Milton Berle show because that appearance would have interfered with his vacation, and he refused a staggering offer to play the European circuit because he doesn't like to fly. But these expressions of independence haven't set him back.

He is wanted by almost every manager who owns a microphone and who has access to an audience. They know that his seven men band (five guitars and steel guitar, accordion, sax, bass, and drums) can team with Halley as these gaudy Scotch plaid jackets, assume a stage with all the excitement of a good deed, follow the hysterical

yell of "Rock!" with a full backing of constant, breathless, super-charged, unrelenting musical singing and clashing, and break all previously held bar office records.

Tenagers, worshipful and obedient, whip themselves up into such a hot frenzy of enthusiasm that they refuse to allow the show to end, and will scream, demand, and beg for encore after encore.

Although the Comets' success is recent, the shy but self-assured Halley has been involved in pop music, in one form or another, all his life. Born in Highland Park, Michigan, he was making a dollar a night at the age of 15 by playing and singing at service clubs. A short time later, he formed his own band and worked wherever he could book the group.

He left home at 15 to go out on his own. He worked in open air parks, sang and picketed with a small band and worked with a traveling medicine show. Eventually he got a job with the Down House, a highly colorful popular in Hartford, Connecticut, and stayed with them until he decided after a useless period of making orders that he was not cut out to be an employee. Aspiring in a quiet way, he was then and still is comfortable only as a boss-man role.

Halley later formed "Bill Halley's Sadie Mae" in Chester, Pennsylvania, and as musical director of Radio Station WFFA there for six years, he worked steadily to develop new acts of presenting his country and western band to a public getting bored with the standard core of romances, chaps, guitars, and associations which always began, "Well, now, howdy, all you folks out there in Radland!"

He experimented with sounds, musical tricks, methods of better displaying his own personality and his men's. By 1950 he was ready to record. He dropped the middle tempo beat of the country and western styles, and gradually up-tempoed along more commercial lines. He changed the name of his group from the Sadie Mae to the Comets, recorded a framed number called "Crazy, Man, Crazy," and by 1952 was snapped up by Decca.

Although Halley and his Comets began to shoot up in fast and as poignantly as real comets (they scored heavily with "Shake, Rattle and Roll," their first Decca release, and with "Din, Din The Lighs," "Jungle Rock," and "Jungle Dance"), their coast-to-coast lease did not actually start to jump until last year when MGM released "The Blackboard Jungle," a blood-poured picture about juvenile delinquents which was accepted by the pretty well on the second half of a screen house. The film boomed everyone through, by becoming one of Hollywood's top grossers in 1955—and as so doing made audiences Halley conscious. His recording of "Rock Around The Clock," which had not done especially good business in the shops, was used as background music in "Jungle."

Shortly after the film's premiere, "Rock Around The Clock" began to sell again. The last count taken shows that it has sold close to two and a half million copies.

Bill Halley is Mr. Hyde as a performer. He plays in a tone away from the land, and three children in a 12 room home in Roselyns, Pennsylvania, and feels an anxious irritation that his performing duties must keep him away from his family to often. When he is home, he works hard at playing. He is serious about losing, hunting and fishing. He knows new cars and changes Cadillac every six months.

It pleases him that the Comets are as famous as he is. As he says, he has been involved in a short pop business in Wilmington, Delaware, and plans are under way to erect a series of hotels, complete with swimming pools. There is never friction between him and his musicians, possibly because two bands which they keep at the Wildwood, N. J., club, and are occasionally trying to hold off engagements to they can live it up in the visitors.

Halley has had disputes (some of them really serious yet) with Jolly Jere, his booking agent, who wants him and his Comets to work steadily. Jere can keep them working every morning, noon, and night, but lately Halley has been paying his last down.

Certainly there won't be any noticeable slackening of record or personal appearances for some time to come. Halley, who with show men's gameness and with an incredible amount of luck, rose to the top quickly, is aware and aware that R & R is not a deathless musical act, that it will fly for a time, then flatter, then die, and his aspiration will be to die. But he is ready to change.

Not long ago he said, "We have tried in our arrangements to conform to what the public wants—and not to head the public likes and dislikes to cure this, I think, is the major factor in our group's success."

By now he is amazed and baffled to shrills that he is misleading the younger generation. He knows that this is the perpetual short of actors, who quickly forget that they themselves were once gaily of such mere discrepancy as wallowing gold fish, drinking bootleg booze and shoving off on party trails. All the expressed fears of what our youth is currently terming "hardening of the arteries" and Halley professes not to worry too much about today's teenagers, whose not far from books well for their future.



backstage

By Arch Ayres

ORIGIN of the strip tease is cloaked in historical obscurity and there are almost as many versions of how the strip started as there are strippers. Newest claim from France is that this year marks the 60th anniversary of strip. It seems that back in 1896 a French gal named Chazmon got the urge to peril while swinging on a trapeze in a circus. She started tossing assorted items of her costumes into the audience until she was indeed the daring young lady on the flying trapeze. Another version claims strip started later at the Folies Bergere and then there are some French who say it all began in America. But of course, the Russians have yet to be heard from in this debate.

* * *

STILL GOOD for a laugh even in her dotage, oldtimer Mae West sounded off about censors the other day. Banned into court innumerable times during her career for offending the watchdogs of other people's morals, Mae audaciously insists that there is need for bluenoses: "Why, if it wasn't for censors, there'd be more and more nakedness on the stage, and finally complete depravity. Shocking!" Shocking indeed.

* * *

SCARING CUSTOMERS is the newest gimmick being used to corral customers in West Coast strip palaces. Taking a cue from such television programs as *Vampira* as well as the Charles Addams cartoons as the New Yorker, Strip City is billing an act called "Frankenstein And His Bride" with ads that read: "Terrifying! Thrilling! Nauseating!" Among songs featured are: "Oh, What A Beautiful Mourning" and "Ghoul Of My Dreams."

* * *

AN OLD CHESTNUT was revived by actor Charles Colburn at a Mt. Sinai hospital board in Hollywood. He told the audience: "When I was a boy, my father said, 'Charlie, don't ever go to a burlesque show. You might see something you shouldn't see.' So I saved my money and went to a burlesque show and sure enough, I saw something I shouldn't have seen—my father."



BRISTLEST BARMALD in the nation seems to have run into Uncle Sam, who thinks that her assets make her a cabaret attraction. She is Ruth Shepherd of Des Moines, Iowa, who sets anywhere from two to four glasses on her ample bosom and poses here in them to the delight of customers (see photo). Three years ago she was hauled into court on charges of an indecent exhibition but the judge had enough good sense to dismiss the case. Now the internal revenue bureau is trying to sock her with a claim of \$44,000 in back taxes. The revenueurs insist that what she is doing is entertainment and therefore her tavern should be subject to the 20 per cent cabaret tax.

* * *

PUBLICITY for Elvis Presley gets better and better while he sings of heartbreak. Newest blast against Elvis and his vague pelvis comes from Oakland, Calif., where a policeman viewing his performance at the local Auditorium said: "(I) he did it in the street, we'd arrest him."

* * *

BLUENOSES are on the warpath in straight-laced old Boston again—this time against oriental dancers. The snooty conspirators of the Near East gals came in for some heated blasts from local censor Mary Driscoll, who claimed they were booked in some clubs as a substitute for strippers. She

warned the club owners: "We don't want stripteases in your places shaking here and shaking there. I'm sensitive about these things and I'll get out myself and see these belly bums." Miss Driscoll was at last admission 72 years old.

* * *

TV AT YOUR TABLE is now featured at Cleo's, famed Sunset Strip club in Hollywood. Its new TV Terrace furnishes a small 14-inch TV set at each table.

* * *

SEX SWITCHING is evidently still a good show business act. Newest to change allegiance from him to her is Ray Bourbon of El Paso, Texas, who has become Rae via what is claimed to be the first such operation performed in North American continent. Ray became Rae in a Mexico hospital and will strut her new personality on night club stages across the country soon.

* * *

A BUSINESSMAN who had fallen in love with a night club entertainer employed a detective agency to check up on her. He received the following report:

"The young lady has an excellent reputation, her past being without a blemish. She has many friends of good social and financial background. The only scowl that we can find against her is that she has been seen lately with a local businessman of questionable character."

* * *

MEXICO has cracked down on what little burlesque can be found in the capital. City amusement boss Adolfo Bustamante clamped a lock on the doors of the Tivoli Theater because they advertised their show as "burlesque like in Paris." Actually the show wasn't anything like Paris but the big line was enough to get the censors started on the warpath.

* * *

DIFFERENCE between a pianist and a piano player was described by singer Pearl Bailey, who considered her accompanist at her Washd' opening as follows: "Mr. Phillips was a pianist. Three years ago he was a piano player. I guess money does make a difference."

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